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JUNE 24, 1978 ONE DOLLAR

Saturday Review

LIVING WITH THE BOMB

How "Safe" Is Nuclear Pollution?

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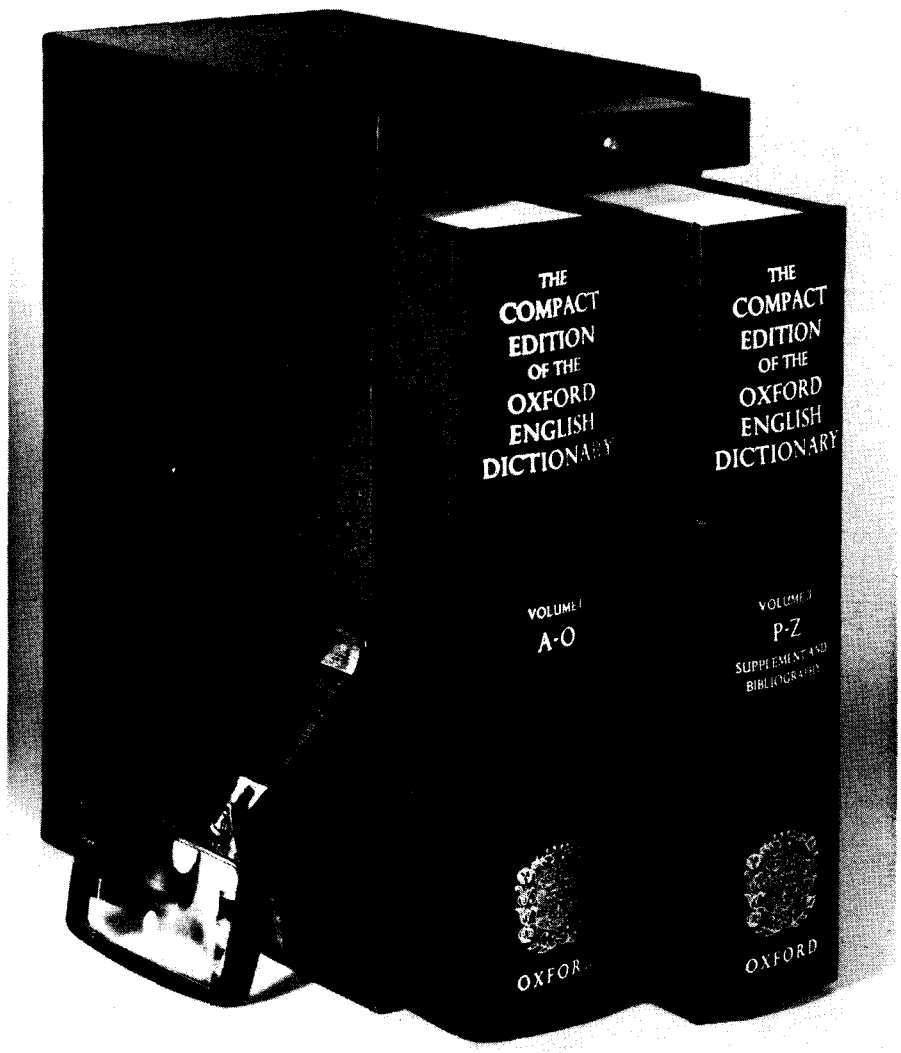

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Some things have to be watched more carefully, depending on how and where you drive your car. For example, if you do a lot of driving on dry, dusty roads, you may need to change the air cleaner and oil filter more often than the maintenance schedule indicates. Remember, the maintenance schedule that comes with your car is based on average driving conditions.

If you have an older car that still needs an annual tune-up, what should it include? There are some basic things to be checked: spark plugs, points, condensers, idling speed, and drive belts. It can't hurt to check the air cleaner and fuel filter, tire pressure, and brake fluid, either. And when you do take your car in for a tune-up, don't be shy. Find out exactly what you need and what you're getting for your money.

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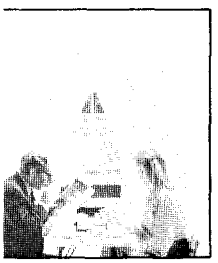

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LETTERS

Carter Commentators

The national epidemic of press attacks on President Carter is well represented by Tad Szulc's encyclopedic indictment ["Our Most Ineffectual Postwar President," April 29]. It is more a carefully researched listing of everybody's complaints than a reasoned analysis. All semblance of fairness was lost when Szulc included among Carter's sins his proposal to install "the U.N. peacekeeping buffer force in the area [Lebanon] instead of the Israeli occupying forces."

Today's crescendo of criticism is reminiscent of the vitriol directed at Truman in the late 1940s. He lived to shame his critics. It is fashionable to damn Carter with the prediction that he will be a one-term president. So what? His willingness to face delicate issues marks him as a man intent on responsible leadership for four years, regardless of the political cost to his future. Do thinking Americans prefer a president of less character?

Charles G. Dobbins
Lovettsville, Va.

Szulc's biases rule his reason. To refer to Jimmy Carter as our most ineffectual postwar president—after Eisenhower's sentimental invisibility, Nixon's folly, and Ford's nonentity—is to display a lack of appreciation of postwar history.

Perhaps Szulc will one day give proper credit to the geometric complexity of the president's task, decry the lethargy of Congress, and censure the cynicism of the press.

Larry Coleman
Kansas City, Mo.

Tad Szulc's analysis of what "Carter's rise to power tell[s] us about ourselves" seems to miss the actual significance of the effect of the Johnson-Nixon-Ford era on the soul of the body politic. The loss of faith took place in the electorate long before, not after, Carter's rise to power. It wasn't so much that our expectations had been aroused by Carter to a degree beyond possible fulfillment but rather that we had no expectation for much from the other politicos.

What Carter doesn't understand is that the cynicism is so deep that the electorate doesn't really expect Congress to act in the people's best interest, so his appeals to them over the heads of Congress will not bear fruit as, say, FDR's appeals did. Our loss of spirit i so complete that there is no reservoir c belief in the general welfare as a prag matic possibility as in previous populis or progressive eras. The fact that w cannot now afford such a period of en nui has not dawned on us. Is it only crisis that can scare us into a prograr of action from which political leader may again emerge?

Carol Quanc
Garden City, Mich

Admittedly, Carter's and Secretar Vance's style is low-key (note, I di not say indecisive)—certainly differer from Kissinger's strong-arm diplomac But the administration's quiet mediat ing missions have been respected an appreciated, as I learned this sprin while traveling in Israel and Jordan.

I believe that the mediating, rathe than the leadership, policy is bearin fruit. Moshe Dayan recently indicate that Israel, Jordan, and the Palestinian could and should confer about divisio of the West Bank. This sounds mor productive than Arafat's and Begin' practice of not giving an inch.

Carter's and Vance's solutions ma not make headlines, but they have chance of being successful. I believ President Carter is on the right tack.

Jean Lovejo
San Rafael, Cali

Report from a Reader

Since becoming a subscriber to *SR* I have opened each issue enthusi astically, always finding challenge, en tertainment, and affirmation of life– this last, a rare quality. Most rewardin has been the sense of being among th fortunate group with whom N.C. ha shared his thoughts.

I now look forward to reading *SR* un der Carll Tucker's editorship. Durin the past year, he has proved himself t be talented, creative, thoughtful, an committed to the magazine.

In our times, with our challenges, w must make our own decisions, but set ting out in N.C.'s direction is essential We have the opportunity to work fo values long affirmed in *SR*, to spar new thought in one another, and t identify our errors. I believe Carl Tucker has begun this course with en thusiasm.

Tucker Schecte
Chapel Hill, N.C

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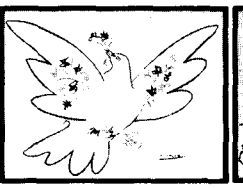
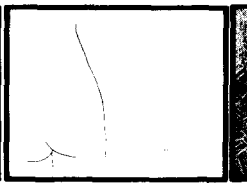
271. VAN GOGH
STARRY NIGHT
Blue, yellow, brown, green, & white.

746. PICASSO
HOMAGE TO THE SUN
Red, blue, green and yellow on white.



745. PICASSO
DOVE OF SPRING
Blue, green, yellow and red on white.

422. DITA
THE RECLINING TIGER
Tan, yellow, white and golden brown.



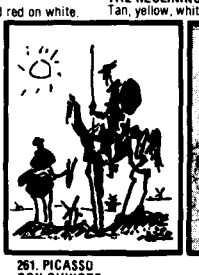
308. PICASSO
FEMME
Black line on crisp white background.

722. ROUSSEAU
VIRGIN FOREST AT SUNSET
Green, tan, yellow, orange and blue.

265. MONET
RED POPPIES
Soft green, blue, white, red & white.

312. PICASSO
LES PETITE FLEURS
Green, yellow, red & blue.

769. RYER
THE LOVERS
Brown, flesh & yellow-gold



261. PICASSO
DON QUIXOTE
Ebony black on pure white.

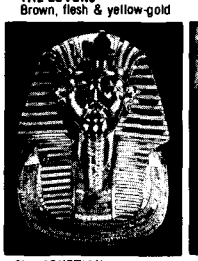
247. PICASSO
BLUE NUDE
Green, blue & yellow-gold.

212. VAN GOGH
SUNFLOWERS
In yellow, orange & green.

902. JONES
AUTUMN LANDSCAPE
Autumn tones of gold, green, brown

766. VAN GOGH
BOATS AT SAINTE MARIE
In windswept blue, green, red & gold.

915. DURER
THE LITTLE OWL
Brown, tan, pink on beige.

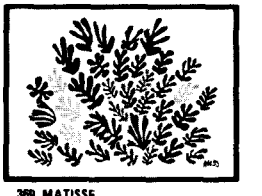


921. EGYPTIAN
TUTANKAMON'S MASK
Blue, gold, white, on black.

276. PICASSO
THE OLD GUITARIST
Shades of blue and green.

764. DA VINCI
WOMAN IN PROFILE
In delicate shades of sepia.

248. VAN GOGH
IRISES
Blue, yellow, green, white.



369. MATISSE
THE LEAVES
Red, green, blue, yellow and black

857. MONET
FIELDS IN SPRING
Yellow, green, tan, blue, tan, beige.

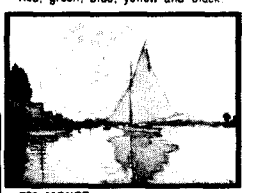
237. FLEMISH TAPESTRY
UNICORN IN CAPTIVITY
Yellow, green, gold, white.

871. DURER
THE HARE
Brown, tan, yellow on beige

701. KLEE
SENECIO
Red, orange, yellow, pink.

266. REMBRANDT
GOLDEN HELMET
Brown, black, red and gold.

210. RUBENS
ARTIST'S SON, JEAN
Soft reddish brown on tan.



766. MONET
SAILING BOAT AT ARGENTEUIL
Blue, yellow, red, leaf green & white

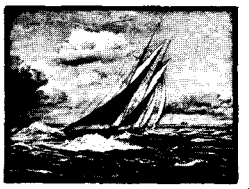
445. MONET
WATER LILIES
Blue, pale violet, green, yellow, white

257. RENOIR
GIRL WITH WATER CAN
Blue, green, yellow, & tan.

313. PICASSO
DANCE OF PEACE
Green, brown, gold, white.

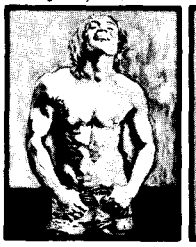
752. VAN GOGH
PEACH TREE
Gold, blue, yellow & sepia.

264. MONET
SUNFLOWERS
Red, green, yellow, & blue.



298. HOLST
THE SCHOONER
Blue, green, white, soft gold & black.

357. MILLET
THE ANGELUS
Harvest brown, green, yellow, orange



803. D.S.
THE JOCK
Blue, green, & flesh tones

496. LAUTREC
ARISTIDE BRUANT
Blue, red, gold, and white

497. LAUTREC
MOULIN ROUGE
Yellow, orange, red, grey.

498. LAUTREC
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By the Numbers

Some people fear a computerized world is going to turn their name into numbers. But not Teneight Kelley. He signs his first name 10-8, and that's how it is on his driver's license. Kelley, seventy-five, of Whitmire, South Carolina, says he got his name because "Mama went ten months with me, and I came out on the eighth day." Teneight says it's a hassle to get the numerical part of his name accepted: "Once an insurance company questioned my name, so I refused to buy their insurance." Even so, Kelley is faring better than the Minnesota man [*SR*, "The Bureaucrats and Mr. 1069," January 21] whose application to change his name to 1069 was turned down flat by the courts.

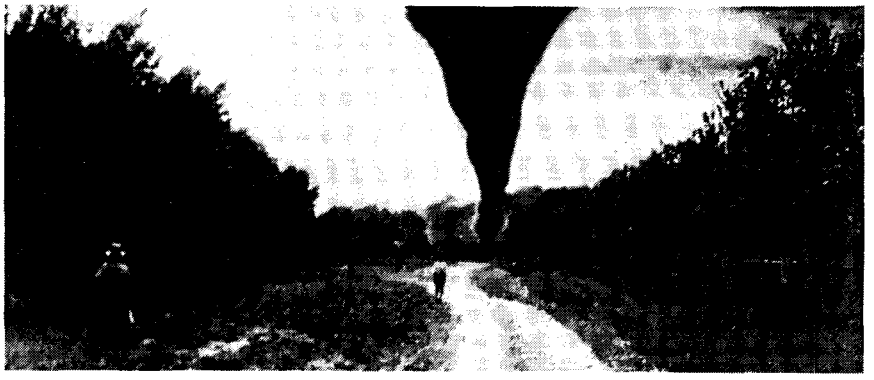
Weighty Matters

Who says the soul is all spirit and no substance? Dr. Nils-Olof Jacobson, a Swedish physician, reports that when he weighed dying patients, hospital bed and all, on scientifically exact scales, each body lost about an ounce of weight at the moment of death, as the soul presumably ascended skyward. These findings are spelled out, says *Human Nature* magazine, in Jacobson's book *Life After Death*. No word on whether the doctor has tried standing on the scales and noting his weight just before and just after exhaling sharply.

Mad in Kansas

How do you infuriate a Kansan? Just mention *The Wizard of Oz*. "The book and the movie," says tornado expert Allen Pearson, of Kansas City, "are just a terrible misrepresentation of Kansas in terms of the tornado image." Pearson protests that at least four other states—Arkansas, Mississippi, Texas, and Oklahoma—have more tornadoes than Kansas has.

Other Kansas beefs against L. Frank Baum's classic story, as spelled out by various state officials and summarized by Carolyn Lesh, of UPI, include these: *The Wizard of Oz* calls Kansas "gray," though the state is in fact bright green in spring and summer, with brilliant blue skies; when people in 16 other states were asked their impressions of Kansas, hundreds of them—clearly influenced by the *Oz* book and movie—called the state "drab"; and Baum was himself a native of New York—the nearest he ever came to living in Kansas was his brief spell as editor of a South Dakota paper, around the turn of the century.



Culver Pictures

A Bad Day at Del Mar

Nothing small-time about Norman Richard Kraus, a California designer and sand-castle buff: Working with a bulldozer and a team of associates on the beach at Del Mar, Kraus recently sculpted out of sand and seawater a remarkable 24-foot-high replica of the famous medieval French abbey, Mont-Saint-Michel. The sand castle took five days to build and lasted for three days. Then it was destroyed in a moment, not by the waves but by passing vandals—an ending somehow reminiscent of a line in Eliot's *Prufrock*, "Till human voices wake us, and we drown."

To the Rear, March!

You might think of the Israeli Army as a women's rights showcase, what with all those smashing-looking sabras wielding machine guns in combat and winning high-level military rank. But the truth is, says AP's Marcus Eliason, that Israel's women soldiers are not *that* equal. Quoting an Israeli government report, Eliason claims that most of the army's women are stuck with secretarial assignments, others are mired in full-time "kitchen police" duty, and a good percentage of the rest spend their time planning USO-type activities for enlisted men.

But what about those Junoesque commando types who turn up on posters and in TV documentaries, fighting shoulder to shoulder with the men? Forget it, the report says in effect—Israeli women soldiers haven't been in a firefight since the 1948 war, and they are not, as a matter of policy, likely ever to see action again. You can also, it seems, forget the scenario that has whole regiments of male soldiers being ordered about the battlefield by steely-eyed female generals: It turns out that the highest-ranking woman in the entire Israeli Army is a colonel. Further, of the 700 military specialties theoretically open to women, only 210 actually have female representation.

There's even more evidence along the above lines, but the situation may best have been summed up by the university student who said of her mandatory two-year stint, "I spent my term sitting around and fighting off my commander's advances. What a waste of time it was!"

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Charity at Public Expense

When the Connecticut-based Olin Corporation was recently found guilty of illegal arms sales to South Africa, U.S. District Judge Robert Zampano levied a fine of $510,000. But instead of permitting the fine to swell the "miscellaneous account" of the U.S. Treasury, as such fines normally do, the judge directed that it be donated to charities in Olin's headquarters city, New Haven. This, he explained, would make reparation to a city whose good name had been besmirched by corporate lawbreakers.

A victory for the innocent and righteous? Not really. Because fines levied by a federal judge are public funds, New Haven has no more right to Olin's money than does any other city—and a lot less right than the federal government. Judge Zampano has in effect assessed each American one quarter of a cent for a charity of his choosing. Our budgets can probably stand the strain, but they shouldn't have to.

Front Runners Submissions

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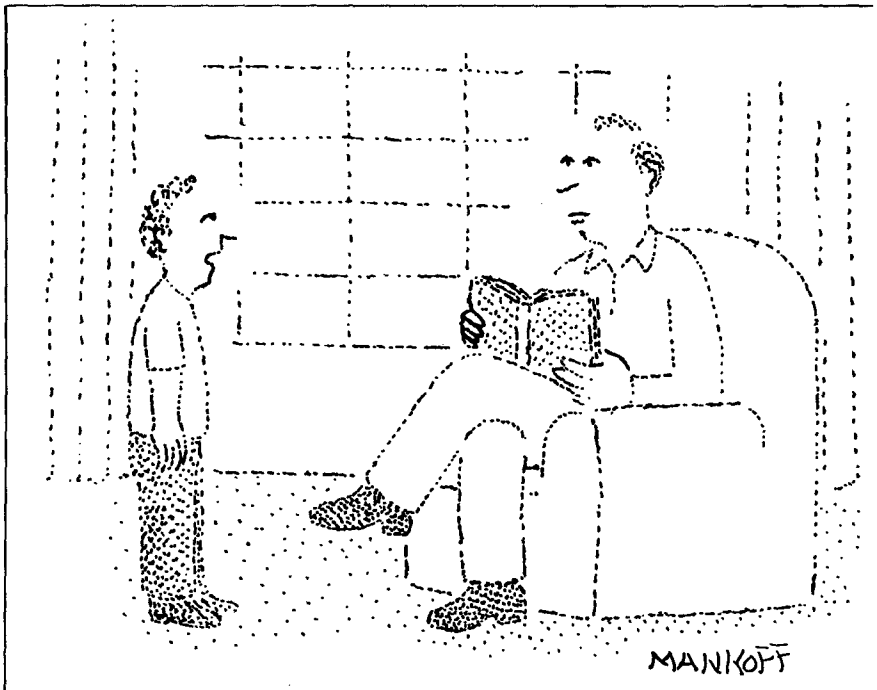
In James Bond's Footsteps

And now, a Disneyland for spy buffs. Yes, if plans go through, you'll soon be able to take the guided tour through "Camp X," the legendary spy-training center in Canada where during World War II Ian "007" Fleming and other covert-action types took eight-week courses in the black arts of espionage. The British-run camp, on Lake Ontario near the town of Whitby, was abandoned and partially dismantled after the war, reports Reuters man Jonathan Sharp. But enough was left behind for local officials recently to begin constructing a replica of the camp as a tourist attraction.

The prize spy exhibit awaiting tourists is an authentic "most secret" red-covered manual titled *The Sabotage Handbook*. A sample cool-but-deadly passage from the manual: "Attack machines in motion, rather than at rest, preferably at a bearing or main casting—the machine will then assist in its own destruction." Other spy stuff on view will include packets of counterfeit German, Dutch, and French money, secret radio transmitters, and maps of European countries printed on silk, with agents' escape routes clearly marked on them in green ink. The camp should attract large numbers of espionage fans, retired spies, and of course apprentice spies from less-developed nations that are eager to master the dirty-tricks techniques pioneered decades ago by the more advanced Western nations.

Bluegrass Blues

What, an outbreak of venereal disease among *racehorses*? Yes, and the epidemic will likely get worse before it gets better. According to Ken Hoskins of the Louisville *Courier-Journal*, 21 Kentucky thoroughbred mares and stallions—a huge number in the tight little world of bluegrass breeders—now have VD, and a brief ban was recently placed on the breeding to one another of horses from different farms, and on the shipping of thoroughbreds out of state for breeding purposes. Despite these precautions, VD is sure to spread among thoroughbreds, says veterinary pathologist Dr. Thomas W. Swerczek, because mares are able to pass on the disease while betraying no symptoms of it themselves. "We haven't seen anything yet," says Dr. Swerczek. "I can guarantee you that ... it's going to be a real problem next year with the carrier mares." Swerczek's draconian solution: artificial insemination, because this joyless procedure eliminates possibly infectious contact between the horses.



"Dad, if a tree falls in the forest, and the media aren't there to cover it, has the tree really fallen?"

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LIVING WITH THE BOMB

HOW "SAFE" IS NUCLEAR POLLUTION?

by Peter J. Ognibene

THE GOVERNMENT builds an industrial plant adjacent to your city and lies about its purpose. Only several years later do you learn that the plant manufactures nuclear weapons. The government tells you not to worry: The plant is perfectly safe.

Then industrial fires at the plant contaminate the atmosphere with radioactive plutonium, an extremely deadly carcinogen. The government claims that the amounts released are too minute to cause harm.

Another radioactive element begins trickling into one of your city's suburban reservoirs. Although the government denies its plant is in any way responsible, the state health department finally traces the leakage back to the plant.

Scientists doing research under government auspices report that workers in plants such as the one outside your city suffer higher rates of cancer than other industrial workers. Government support for the scientists' research is suddenly withdrawn.

What you have just read is an abbreviated history of Rocky Flats, a nuclear weapons factory outside Denver, and the government agency that created it, the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC).

When work began on the plant, in 1951, Denver residents were not told its true purpose. Four years later, they learned that their neighbor was in the business of manufacturing atom bombs. Thus began the fateful pattern of excluding American citizens from information and decisions that greatly affect their health and safety.

Located 16 miles northwest of Denver, Rocky Flats, with its gray and shabby buildings, looks at first glance like an old military base. But there are also newer structures, shiny and barnlike, resembling those one might find at any industrial facility. Although the government built and owns Rocky Flats, a civilian contractor has always run it. This odd arrangement grew out of the government's determination to give private enterprise as many opportunities as possible to integrate nuclear energy into the domestic economy. Dow Chemical was the first contractor, but Rockwell International took over the operation in July 1975.

Although details about the plant are naturally secret, Rocky Flats is, in the words of Dr. Robert E. Yoder, the plant's health and safety officer, "a metalworking factory where the metal just happens to be plutonium." Every thermonuclear or fusion weapon requires a fission device to trigger the fusion reaction. Using plutonium, Rocky Flats manufactures these nuclear triggers.

One of the most toxic substances created by man, plutonium must be carefully controlled. It will ignite spontaneously in air; so it must always be contained in an inert atmosphere. Lead and concrete protect workers from its deadly radiation; air filters keep them from inhaling the tiny particles of plutonium that can cause lung cancer. Because of these precautions, officials claim the plant is safe. "I don't perceive a health risk in the operation of the plant," said Robert O. Williams, the Rockwell executive in charge of Rocky Flats. "I see it as having a minimal health risk in the urban community."

That urban community is Denver and its suburbs; together they contain a million and a half people. Many of them—perhaps most—have only the vaguest understanding of Rocky Flats, but some Coloradans are deeply concerned that it poses risks to their communities that are considerably more than "minimal." A series of mishaps and incidents at the plant has made many Coloradans skeptical of official optimism.

Technicians at Rocky Flats working with nuclear materials, using radiation-resistant "glove box."

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Major plutonium fires in 1957 and 1969 spewed radioactivity into the environment, but when Dr. Edward A. Martell, a radiochemist at the National Center for Atmospheric Research, in nearby Boulder, wanted to test the soil at the plant for plutonium contamination, he was denied permission. So he surveyed the soil just downwind of the plant and found plutonium contamination hundreds of times higher than normal. (Atmospheric nuclear tests have scattered plutonium fallout worldwide, establishing what are called background, or normal, levels of radiation.)

Plutonium has a half-life of 24,000 years, meaning its radioactivity will diminish by half over that period. So the bits and pieces left after the weapons have been built must be carefully stored in containers and at sites that will permanently keep them from contaminating the environment. In 1958, Dow Chemical took the plutonium-contaminated oil used in the fabrication process and began storing it in steel drums in an open field. Leaks were discovered the following year. Although rust retardant was added to the drums, apparently no other safeguards were taken. Winds picked up the plutonium-contaminated soil near the leaky drums and carried it south and east of the plant, toward Denver, Broomfield, and Golden. For 10 years, these leaks continued without the public's being informed.

In 1973, some scrap plutonium was sent to Rocky Flats to be reprocessed. What made this otherwise ordinary event unusual was the presence of tritium, a radioactive element that is an isotope of hydrogen. Dow did not detect the tritium, and it subsequently percolated into the earth and traveled down Walnut Creek into the Great Western Reservoir, which is the source of water for Broomfield, a suburban town of 14,000 located halfway between Denver and Boulder.

The tritium contamination was discovered not by Dow or the AEC but by the Colorado Department of Health. James L. Montgomery, the section chief for radiological health, said, "We take samples from Walnut Creek every other day, and we saw a high level of radioactivity. The level was so high—tens of thousands of times higher [than normal]—that we at first suspected our own technique. After we ruled out human and testing errors, we literally traced the source of the tritium all the way back to the plant."

Dow denied that Rocky Flats was the source of the tritium. "They dared us to go in and find it," said Montgomery, "and we did."

EACH TIME something went wrong at Rocky Flats, the instinctive reaction of Dow and the AEC was to cover up, to assert that nothing was wrong or—if something wrong had been revealed by an outside agency—that everything was under control. That sort of arrogance fueled local opposition to the plant.

The opposition has formed on three fronts. The American Friends Service Committee and like-minded peace or environmental groups have carried on a public campaign against Rocky Flats. Their weapons include broadsides denouncing the plant, testimony at public hearings, and demonstrations at the plant's gates.

At the end of April, 4,000 demonstrators staged a peaceful protest at Rocky Flats. Early in May, 28 protesters, including Daniel Ellsberg, of Pentagon Papers fame, were arrested for blocking the railroad tracks leading into the plant. A spokesman for the demonstrators said they were concerned about the dangers that could come from the transportation of nuclear material.

The second front is the federal district court, where a local landowner has brought suit (*Church* v. *U.S.*) against the government, alleging that Rocky Flats has contaminated his land and thereby diminished its value.

High-speed armored vehicle roams grounds of Rocky Flats plant, alert for intrusions by unauthorized personnel.

The third battle against Rocky Flats is being waged in the seemingly genteel pages of various scientific journals. The nuclear establishment argues that Rocky Flats poses no serious threat to the health and safety of the public while critics suggest that the plant may be raising the risks of cancer and genetic defects for local residents.

At Rocky Flats, the plutonium and the machinery used to shape it are contained in stainless steel enclosures called glove boxes. Lead oxide in their rubber gloves, lead glass windows, and lead shielding reduce the amount of radiation reaching workers. The plutonium is melted and poured through a tantalum funnel into graphite molds. The resulting ingots are then machined into their proper shape.

This process leaves behind a considerable amount of residue. Minute portions of plutonium pass through the air filters and directly into the atmosphere. Although a system is being developed to contain all liquid wastes on the site, they have to date been percolating into the water table and flowing into nearby aquifers, streams, and lakes. Plant officials claim that these pollutants present no danger to the public.

A number of scientists and public health officers disagree. One of them is Dr. Carl J. Johnson, the soft-spoken director of the Jefferson County Health Department. In 1974, Johnson began to study the amount of plutonium in the soil. He took samples from several locations a few miles from Rocky Flats and found them running as high as 3,390 times the background radiation.

Johnson's findings are controversial. Because plutonium presents its greatest peril when inhaled, Johnson took his samples from the dust near the surface, going no deeper than half a centimeter. Scientists from Rocky Flats prefer to go some two inches deep. All that accomplishes as far as Johnson is concerned is to dilute the respirable plutonium particles with dirt.

Martell is highly critical of the Department of Energy (DOE) and its predecessors, the AEC and the Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA). "They have been completely unscientific about alpha radiation cancer," he said.

Alpha particles pack about 10 times the energy of X rays or gamma rays, but they lack the penetrating power of the

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IS NUCLEAR POWER A LICENSE TO KILL?

by Susan Schiefelbein

NEXT TO the atomic weapons industry, the atomic power industry may seem a gentle giant, benignly providing some 10 percent of the nation's energy needs. Appearances, however, are deceiving. Studies now indicate that even as nuclear plants generate power, they take human lives.

The fatalities have nothing to do with the fearsome major accidents that environmentalists predict; they are connected instead to the spills and emissions that are presently seeping from atomic power plants throughout the nation. Physicists, radiologists, and biologists predict that the death toll, which may now be in the thousands, will in time climb into the hundreds of thousands; for radioactive poisons, they say, are stealthy killers, lying latent in the body for a decade before erupting into cancer. Moreover, these radioactive isotopes will not decay for centuries; and so their furtive killing power can only intensify as leakage increases throughout the years. Statistics show this grim process has already begun: The six states with the largest nuclear facilities—Washington, Connecticut, Tennessee, Rhode Island, New Jersey, and South Carolina—also claim the nation's most rapidly increasing cancer rates.

In view of these facts, scientists say, the government's attitude toward the problem is chilling: It neither punishes nor measures consistent industry leakage of high-level radioactive isotopes.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC)—the federal agency that oversees atomic power plants—continues to assert however that its regulations are adequate. "The government provides significant restrictions on the release of radioactive material in normal anticipated occurrences," says William Kreger, chief of the NRC's radiological assessment branch. "The doses to which the public is exposed are small—less than one tenth the amount of the radiation in the earth's natural background."

Nature exposes each of us to a dose of 100 millirems a year, Kreger explains. (A millirem is a measure of radiation in the body.) In order to get a license, a power plant must not expose the public to more than the "design objective value" of 10 millirems a year—an amount that Kreger says is "so small you can't see its effects on human beings." He adds that all the power reactors in the United States "meet the requirements."

Does this mean that no power plant has ever given the public a dose greater than 10 millirems? Not exactly. "Plants that have seen a value above the design objective must report the excess to the NRC, cease operation, and propose how to correct the matter," according to Kreger. He neglected to add, however, that the "excess" can be well above the 10 millirem limit before such a report is expected. How much above? Kreger didn't know. One of his colleagues gave the answer: 500 millirems.

Such exposures may seem innocuous on the pages of an NRC report, but they have a pernicious effect on the human body, experts say. According to Dr. John Gofmann, professor emeritus of medical physics at the University of California and one of the nation's most authoritative critics on radiation standards, the background radiation of which Kreger speaks kills some 20,000 Americans a year. One tenth the dose would cause one tenth the deaths. "If it is true that the industry is operating at its design objective value," Gofmann says, "it is causing an extra 2,000 cancer deaths a year. I don't think an amount of radiation that kills 2,000 people is, as Kreger says, a 'small value.' "

Nor do the death warrants stop there, according to Gofmann. The radioactive wastes produced by power plants must be stored for some 500 to 250,000 years. If just one thousandth of the radiation is lost in storage—that is, if storage is 99.9 percent perfect—then in time, some 190,000 cancer fatalities will be added to the national death tolls each year.

"The only solution to the radiation problem," Gofmann concludes, "is to shut down the power plants. I see no future for nuclear power if there is to be a future for human beings."

Other scientists have confirmed and compounded Gofmann's contentions. The NRC, however, seems less than impressed by their findings. Kreger, for example, has described some of the studies as "unreputable" and "highly publicized but criticized." One unfavorable study prompted NRC officials to "question its scientific methods" despite the fact that it was a *government* report.

But even if these studies don't represent deadly realities, they do pose at the very least some grim possibilities—grim enough certainly to warrant vigilance. One may thus be startled to discover that despite Kreger's assurances about "significant" regulations, the NRC doesn't even measure radiation emissions. "The design objective value," Gofmann says, "is just that—an objective. In English, the term means 'you can release anything you goddamn please.' " It is, moreover, a measure of *potential* leakage, which is determined before the plant is even licensed. Daily operating emissions are measured—if at all—by the plants themselves, an arrangement that Gofmann calls "the mouse guarding the cheese." In repeated cases where environmentalists have insisted that government double-check certain plants, the agency has in fact found significantly higher releases than had been reported by the power plants.

Equally disturbing is the fact that the industry and the agency together have repeatedly claimed that even unplanned, accidental exposures pose no health hazard—an eventuality that Gofmann insists is impossible: "There is no exposure to radiation that is a safe exposure. The NRC has always said that accidents involving irradiation pose no health hazards to the public. The only danger in that statement comes with believing it. 'No health hazard' is bureaucratese for 'We in the NRC are befuddling you; obfuscation is our motto.' "

In the meantime, newspapers are full of NRC and industry claims that accidents have been harmless. A leak that closed a plant in Rochester, New York, "represented no danger to plant workers or to the public." An accident at the Clinton, Illinois, power plant "did not expose workers to an unacceptable amount of radiation." An accident at the Fort Saint Vrain plant emitted a dose that was "well above design objective values," but "the public didn't receive a dosage."

Nuclear physicists who know that by definition "unacceptable" doses of radiation *have* to have been released are puzzled, to say the least, by such newspaper accounts. For years, the American people have heard debates about nuclear power and have wondered which side has been telling the truth. With each passing day, the answer is becoming more apparent. ◉

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latter. Although alpha particles are easily stopped by clothing and skin, if they are inhaled or swallowed, they can do a terrible amount of damage to the surrounding tissue. Martell believes that "many cancers in man may be due to insoluble alpha-emitting particles" that have lodged inside the body.

Dr. John Cobb, a professor of preventive medicine at the University of Colorado Medical Center, is concerned about possible genetic damage caused by plutonium contaminants from Rocky Flats. "Plutonium goes to the testes and ovaries and probably damages germ cells, but we don't know," he said.

At Rocky Flats, Yoder takes a different view. "Plutonium does go to the lungs," he said. "If it gets dissolved, it goes to the bone, liver, and pancreas.... You can probably find it everywhere in the body, but the studies to date show that the plutonium that is deposited internally is remote from the site of germinal cell production. Therefore, you can conclude from a genetic standpoint that there is no effect."

Federal regulations establish a limit on the amount of plutonium a worker may have in his body; it is called the maximum permissible body burden, or MPBB. In careful, scientific language, health researchers at the University of Denver concluded that workers at Rocky Flats who had low levels of internal plutonium exhibited certain effects. "We were somewhat surprised," the researchers reported, "at the elevated prevalence of chromosome aberrations in the one to 10 percent BB [body burden] individuals." They also found "a marked increase in the prevalence of total structural aberrations in the [greater than] 50 percent MPBB group of men."

Will these "chromosome aberrations" ultimately have somatic or genetic consequences? At present, no one knows. This gap in our knowledge can be attributed in large part to the way the federal government responded to the nuclear era following World War II.

The AEC, formed in 1946, was given complete control over all things nuclear: the development of weapons, nuclear power, the licensing of industrial facilities, and the study of somatic and genetic effects.

By 1946, studies done on workers who had painted radium dials on clocks and watches had alerted medical science to the hazards of radiation. Yet unaccountably, federal agencies have been reluctant to follow the health records of those coming into regular contact with plutonium.

LAST YEAR, Rockwell reported that 56 former workers at Rocky Flats had died of cancer since 1952. The records indicated that 48 of those deaths had occurred since 1970. It would seem statistically improbable that only eight workers would have died of cancer during the plant's first 18 years of operation. According to Felix Owen, Rockwell's director of information at Rocky Flats, the death records left by the former contractor, Dow Chemical, were nothing more than "notes on pieces of paper. There was no real program to record the cause of death."

Perhaps the greatest oversight of all is the absence of studies on the offspring of nuclear workers. No one I interviewed knew of any studies to determine the genetic consequences to children whose parents were occupationally exposed to radiation.

"We'd know all we need to know about plutonium," said Yoder, "if someone had asked the right questions in 1945."

Why were no federal studies undertaken? "Let's look at the times," he said. "Everyone was really concerned about nuclear war, and the United States was determined to be number one. That philosophy was a prime mover in this country. There were only so many dollars to go around. Maybe some studies were thought of, but there wasn't enough money to go around."

Others take a less charitable view. They suggest that the AEC consciously decided to avoid such studies for fear that adverse findings might slow the growth of an embryonic nuclear industry. They cite the Mancuso case as a current example.

Dr. Thomas F. Mancuso, an epidemiologist at the University of Pittsburgh, began an ambitious study in 1964 of cancer among workers exposed to radiation. The government terminated his contract when he found that plutonium workers at Washington State's Hanford Nuclear Works suffered higher than normal rates of cancer.

The nuclear establishment discounts Mancuso's findings. At Rocky Flats, Yoder called it "the most ill-conceived study ever put together on health effects." Both he and the DOE prefer to rely on a study of 25 Los Alamos workers who were exposed to high levels of radiation in the 1940s; none of them have died of cancer.

If Mancuso is right however, the implications for Rocky Flats are tremendous. Entirely new industrial facilities would have to be designed and built; glove boxes would have to be replaced by remote control devices that would greatly slow the fabrication process and increase costs; the government might find itself legally liable for damages if workers contracted cancer.

The AEC and its successors have had three decades in which they could have undertaken detailed studies of the somatic and genetic effects of radiation, but they did not. They have had an equally dismal record in matters of public accountability.

A similar sort of indifference toward the public marked Dow's tenure at Rocky Flats. Although supporters and critics of the plant seem to agree that the present contractor, Rockwell International, is doing a better job, the old attitude has not completely disappeared. Rocky Flats has been made more accessible to state officials, citizens' groups, and the press, but incidents continue to occur.

Within a month after Rockwell took over, in 1975, the gloves in two of the glove boxes collapsed on successive

Deer nuzzling unidentified friend is one of a large herd allowed to forage on Rocky Flats's grounds: By testing the herd regularly for signs of radiation sickness, technicians keep checks on possible leakage of nuclear contaminants from the plant.

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"Radiation destroys slowly. Evidence suggests that no amount of it is safe. The worker who receives a 'safe dosage' today may ultimately have to pay for it in the cancer ward."

Wide World

Daniel Ellsberg (foreground) and other antinuclear demonstrators are led away by police after blocking train tracks leading to Rocky Flats complex. Sympathizing protesters follow at a distance.

days. Two workers suffered some plutonium contamination as a result.

The following year, a plastic disk containing plutonium fell from an office cabinet where it was illegally stored. When it shattered, a number of people were exposed to radiation.

In March of last year, the state health department was surprised to learn that curium, a new radioactive element, was being used at Rocky Flats. Although plant director Williams claims that he personally pointed out the curium laboratory to state officials, no written or formal notice was given. State health officers, who had received a jolt four years before when tritium leaked into the water table, were upset that a new radioactive element had been introduced at Rocky Flats without their being aware of it.

THEN IN APRIL 1977, the manager of the Jefferson County Airport, which is located a few miles east of Rocky Flats, complained to federal officials about plutonium shipments in and out of the airport. Congressman Timothy Wirth, the Colorado Democrat whose district includes the plant as well as the airport, asked for and received a report from the ERDA describing the purpose of the flights, which had taken place since January 1976.

The law at the time permitted shipments of plutonium by air if national security was at stake. Yet ERDA officials interpreted the law so loosely that when a truck could not get to Rocky Flats because of snow, they decided that considerations of "national security" would allow them to fly the plutonium to its destination rather than wait a day or so for the truck. The ERDA did not have containers that could have withstood an aircraft accident, and the "shipper had a bad accident record," according to Wirth. Flying the plutonium out of a small county airport simply because it was convenient indicated the same sort of public-be-damned attitude present at the AEC's inception.

Wirth authored an amendment that closed the national security loophole. "They are precluded by law from shipping by air," he said, "unless they use the improved [crashworthy] containers." Because such containers have yet to be certified for flight, Wirth's amendment has apparently put a stop to shipments of plutonium by air.

Williams and DOE officials at Rocky Flats have made some improvements. In February of this year, there was a small fire involving beryllium, a highly toxic but nonradioactive substance, and a DOE official at the plant informed the Colorado Department of Health within the hour. Officials from Rocky Flats and from the state meet each month to exchange information, and the public is welcome. A citizens' monitoring committee is permitted regular access to the plant to perform a watchdog role. Such changes must certainly be entered on the positive side of the ledger.

Yet the history of the atomic age suggests that the American people have not been well served by those who were entrusted with the development of nuclear weapons. After World War II, the AEC had carte blanche in the nuclear field and the funds to pursue whatever avenue it wished. That nuclear radiation was dangerous to man was well known; what was not known was the extent of that danger to nuclear workers. Studies to determine those hazards should have been started then.

Radiation destroys slowly. The nuclear worker in the prime of his life feels no ill effects and tends to dismiss critics of his industry as alarmists. Lead and concrete stand between him and the source; individual dosimeters record the amount of radiation his body receives; plant officials conscientiously monitor his exposure to make certain it falls well below the level specified by current standards. Yet a large amount of scientific evidence suggests that no amount of radioactive exposure is safe. Indeed, the exposure standards have been lowered by a factor of 100 over the past 30 years and may be lowered again. So the worker who receives a "safe dose" today may ultimately have to pay for it in the sterile anonymity of a cancer ward.

Large questions that might have been answered years ago continue to face us. What are the consequences to health and safety of plants such as Rocky Flats? Is there a "safe level" of exposure to radiation? If no level is safe, what are the risks? And most important of all, who will decide which individuals will take those risks?

These are not simply scientific questions; these are public issues. To make an informed choice, we need unbiased information. But three decades of experience with the AEC suggest that its current descendant, the DOE, cannot be trusted to look into the somatic and genetic effects of the very industry it is promoting.

The only remedy in a democracy is for the people to reassert their authority by choosing new representatives in Congress to guard the public's health and safety. ◉

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TRENCH COATS FOR SALE

THE ECLIPSE OF THE FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT

by Don Cook

EARLY LAST YEAR, the then-ailing *Chicago Daily News* called home from London, Paris, Nairobi, and Hong Kong the last four of its once famous staff of foreign correspondents. Intent on economies, the paper's owners clearly considered on-scene foreign reportage an expendable luxury. (The move didn't help: The *News* was dead by year's end.) Meanwhile, the Scripps-Howard papers had wound up their overseas operations, bringing back their sole roving European correspondent from his base, in Paris. The Pulitzer committee then announced that because it had found no entry that would justify a Pulitzer Prize for international reporting in 1976, it was skipping the award for the first time since it was established 35 years ago.

In Paris today, the Crillon Bar is all but deserted. There are only a handful of American or British correspondents around the city who might turn up as they used to for a quick drink before lunch—but not very often at $6 for a gin and tonic. The Savoy Hotel, in London, is a comfortable, unchanging mausoleum of nostalgia. Today's tourists never hear the air raid sirens wailing, nor do they see the bar and lobby crowded with trench coats and uniforms and with the likes of Ed Murrow, Larry Rue, Quent Reynolds, Tex O'Reilly, Cliff Daniel, Bill Shirer, Homer Bigart, Helen Kirkpatrick, Ed Beattie, Bill Stoneman, Charlie Collingwood, Johnny Gunther, Drew Middleton, Jimmy Sheehan, Marguerite Higgins, Geof Parsons, and Eric Sevareid. On the banks of the Rhine, the hard-core lunchtime gathering at the press *Stammtisch* at the American Club, near Bonn, is a far cry, half a century, another world away, from the Adlon Hotel, in Berlin. Glamour has long since gone from foreign reporting, and now it is a fading profession as well.

Only three American newspapers still operate full-fledged overseas staffs, with their own correspondents assigned to major capitals on a global basis: *The New York Times* keeps 31 staff reporters overseas; the *Los Angeles Times* has 17 foreign bureaus; and *The Washington Post* fields 13 correspondents abroad. Of course the news agencies—the Associated Press, with 81 American reporters, and the United Press International, with 67, including editors and photographers—operate on a far more extensive global scale. In the magazine field, both *Time* and *Newsweek* also continue to maintain more or less stable worldwide staff deployment.

Apart from these major newspapers, the *Baltimore Sun*, to its great credit, continues to paddle against the financial tide and maintains staff men in London, Paris, Bonn, Moscow, the Middle East, and Hong Kong. Its correspondents cover Africa and Latin America on periodic roving assignments. The *Christian Science Monitor*, with its rather specialized readership, operates similarly, with six staff correspondents overseas. The *Wall Street Journal* has a sizable foreign staff but prefers for its own editorial reasons to concentrate its people; it has a large London bureau, for example, that sends reporters across the Channel on specific assignments but has no staff men in Paris, Brussels, Bonn, Rome, or Moscow. Of the big newspaper chains, only the Hearst Press has any kind of foreign operation, with correspondents in London, Paris, and Rome.

But after that, things get bleak: The *Chicago Tribune* keeps a bureau in London going with a full-time staff man, presumably in memory of Colonel Robert R. McCormick, and also one in Moscow. Paul Block, of the *Toledo Blade*, is the only small-daily publisher who has insisted on having his own experienced staff man roving in Europe from a London base for more than 20 years, despite the feelings of his auditors. Among the magazines, McGraw-Hill and *U.S. News and World Report* keep small staff operations going abroad. And that, dear readers, is about it.

It is difficult in this business to be precise about statistics and definitions. Organizations often keep up a front by utilizing staff stringers hired abroad on a fixed retainer, without any of the financial extras of special allowances, much travel, and home leave that would be due a staff correspondent sent overseas from the United States. Stringers can be perfectly competent correspondents, but any editor would agree that there is always a professional element lacking when it comes to dealing with a stringer instead of your own man.

In any case, a survey carried out by the Overseas Press Club of America shows that in 1975 there were 429 full-time American correspondents working abroad (including radio and TV network people as well as the writing press). At that time, American news organizations also hired another 247 non-American staffers abroad. This grand total of 676 American news media employees overseas in 1975 contrasts with the totals of 797 three years earlier, in 1972, and 929 back in 1969, when the Vietnam War was at its height. Whatever the definition of "full-time American correspondents," the pattern is clear: There has been a drop of more than one third in

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Photographs from Wide World

their number in the six years from 1969 to 1975, and the decline is still going on.

The picture is particularly depressing for the written word—for it is the American newspapers that are steadily opting out of overseas reporting, giving up the ghost of foreign correspondence. You can never fit quality, competence, experience, competition, into statistics. But certainly the qualitative loss is greater than the statistical loss. Statistically, a television performer counts the same as a writer, but it is the writers who are disappearing.

In days past, there was always a steady influx of lively, hardworking, talented, well-trained top assignment reporters arriving overseas from a variety of American newspapers. They added great zest, drive, competitiveness, and just plain fun—far more than mere numbers—to foreign reporting. With more correspondents around, there was a lot more teaming up on trips, ferreting out stories. If you worked for a Boston or New York paper and a fellow correspondent was writing for an audience in Chicago or Minneapolis, it was natural and a lot more productive for both of you to get together to work on a story. Today this has all but dried up. Correspondents more often than not are competing with themselves—with inertia, limits on expense money, uncertainty, indifference, or negative treatment from the desks back home.

There has been no head-to-head competition between American correspondents sent abroad by newspapers from the same city since the *New York Herald Tribune*—which once had the best staff in the business—folded, in 1966, and left the city to the recondite editorial wisdom of *The New York Times*. In Chicago, the competitive situation was somewhat different between the morning *Tribune* and the afternoon *Daily News*, but that is also finished now anyway. Along with the disappearance of these quality staffs and with Scripps-Howard folding its last foreign tent, the following have also given up on overseas staffs in recent years: *Washington Star*, *New York Daily News*, *Kansas City Star*, *Boston Globe*, *Chicago Sun-Times*, *Philadelphia Bulletin*, *Minneapolis Journal*, the Copley Newspapers, the Knight Newspapers. The list would be much longer if it included papers that staffed the Vietnam War and then bowed out. In the magazine field within memory, the old *Saturday Evening Post*, *Colliers*, *The Reporter*, and *Life* used to keep staff correspondents overseas, and all have folded. An awful lot of experience, quality,

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The Bettman Archive

LEGENDARY CORRESPONDENTS— On far page, in shirt sleeves, Edward R. Murrow, in London (1939). Above Murrow: Marguerite Higgins (1951), Charles Collingwood (1940s), Geoffrey Parsons (1942), John Gunther (1936). At left, William Shirer, in Berlin broadcast booth (1942). Above: Quentin Reynolds, in Libyan Desert (1940s).

and talent have disappeared from the ranks of foreign reporting.

Even the columnists scarcely turn up abroad anymore. Joe and Stewart Alsop, Walter Lippmann, and Marquis Childs used to enliven overseas reportage with regular visits to Europe or Asia at least once and often twice a year or more. Today only Joseph Kraft makes a consistent effort to get overseas regularly and to keep up his own foreign diplomatic and political contacts.

It is all too easy to account for the decline. It begins of course with money. A pretty good ball park figure for maintaining a correspondent overseas these days is around $100,000 a year. This will often run higher if the man is charging around vast distances, such as in Africa. In order to cover the single story of the French hauling down their last colonial flag, in Djibouti, a *Los Angeles Times* man flew from Nairobi to Paris and back to Djibouti—a total distance of about 7,000 miles, when the direct flight between the two points would have been barely 1,000 miles if there had been any available connection. It is an expensive business. But probably not all that much more expensive than keeping a man traveling with the president of the United States (certainly in the Nixon days) or following the nonstop peregrinations of the secretary of state. The difference of course is that covering the White House or the State Department offers editors and publishers a sure investment in instant prestige and the certainty of page one headlines. The usefulness and value of a good foreign correspondent are admittedly somewhat more abstract.

BUT THE REASON FOR THE DECLINE in American reporting abroad is by no means entirely a lack of money. If the gallant *Baltimore Sun* can squeeze a foreign staff out of its resources, what about the *Miami Herald*, with the second largest advertising lineage in America? Are the people of Miami less sophisticated than the newspaper readers in Baltimore or Los Angeles?

Certainly the newspaper business in the United States is profitable—witness the astronomical prices that papers command when they are bought and sold. According to *Business Week*, good newspaper properties will average pretax profits of from 25 to 30 percent or higher. Sixty percent of American newspapers are now chain owned: Four giants control 20 percent of all circulation; 12 of them control 40 percent. What

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"Editors spike all that foreign copy and then suddenly wake up to find that some two-bit oil sheikh is making life difficult for their readers."

are these profitable conglomerates doing? What about the Knight-Ridder chain? The Newhouse papers? The Gannett holdings? For them, it seems sufficient to paste up wire service stories, augmenting the copy with either *The New York Times* news service or *The Washington Post/Los Angeles Times* wire. The money is there, but the publishers can sell papers without spending it on foreign news. Chain publishers bring to publishing all of the business acumen and intellectual fervor of the local supermarket manager, displaying and merchandising somebody else's products at a minimum cost with maximum profits. Sitting on monopoly morning or afternoon properties, a publisher doesn't need much imagination, spark, or even good journalism to sell newspapers. The chains make plenty out of American journalism, but what are they putting into it? Nothing, when it comes to sustaining American reporting overseas.

Sadly, there has been an unraveling effect: The decline in the number of jobs has been followed by a decline in quality. It used to be that quality was largely maintained through a reservoir of correspondents who first found their feet abroad as number twos or number threes in big bureaus like those in London or Paris and then moved on up to take over a one-man bureau, with a firm footing in an overseas career. Those days are gone. And the paradox is that with fewer jobs to fill, editors are having more and more trouble finding solidly qualified correspondents to fill them. The old reservoir has dried up.

It is relatively easy to take chances trying out reporters on local or national assignments. Not so in sending a man abroad. At home, there is always plenty of backup, and it is easy for an editor to get on the phone, give quick guidance or do the necessary handholding with a reporter who is feeling his way—even to dictate a reporter's lead. If the man flubs it, well, he can be shifted to another assignment where he might work out fine, and the flub hasn't cost very much.

Sending a man abroad is a much bigger investment, and it takes time to rectify or even to discover a mistake. That is why in the old days it was so important to be able to try out a man in a big bureau—like nurturing a good shortstop in a Class A league. There is no guarantee at all that the most competent, experienced, and steady man on a domestic staff will work out overseas.

News assignments on the domestic front are usually fairly precise and well defined. Foreign assignments are totally diffuse. You are a political writer, an economic writer, a diplomatic correspondent, a science reporter, a sportswriter, a war correspondent, a crime writer, a music critic, a cultural writer, an ecology expert, an obituary writer, a columnist—and of course all editors are transfixed by good feature writers. You can be on patrol with the British Army in Ulster one day and covering a Common Market summit conference the next. You can be dodging bullets in Beirut and soon after be writing about the economic impact of an Arab oil price increase. You are an expert on Eurocommunism, nuclear proliferation and the problems of the plutonium fuel cycle, the impact on relations between Norway and Russia of the 200-mile fishing limit in the Barents Sea and why Jacques Chirac is trying to wreck Valéry Giscard d'Estaing's government. You are a military expert on NATO matters, an economic expert on OECD, a disarmament expert on SALT, and a human rights expert in Helsinki or Belgrade.

None of this means that foreign correspondents are automatically the supermen of journalism. As the old saying goes, they put on their trousers one leg at a time, the same as everybody else does. There are round pegs and round holes, and there are square pegs and square holes. Nevertheless, there is a demand and a standard in foreign reporting that is not easy to fulfill automatically. Both *The New York Times* and *Newsweek* had to go outside their own staffs recently to fill one of their key posts overseas—correspondent in Bonn. *Newsweek* hired a British journalist from *The Times*, of London, and *The New York Times* took on an experienced European staff man from the Associated Press for the job. It was yet another example of the dearth of good new talent, the drying up of the old reservoir of experienced men.

And so we are a fading lot. If this fact is indeed a reflection of a fading American interest in the world scene, as it is sometimes claimed to be, or of a fading American sense of involvement in or commitment to international affairs, then it is not merely sad but tragic. Except I suspect that our "fading lot" derives only from publishers' desires to save money by downgrading foreign news and the expense of foreign staffs. Publishers are always ready to determine the tastes of their readers. But the *Los Angeles Times* prints *more* foreign stories on its page one than either *The New York Times* or *The Washington Post*, and this practice hasn't stopped its growth. The soybean farmers of Iowa are a lot more concerned and sensitive about what happens in the European Common Market than are the editors of the Knight-Ridder chain.

Editors spike all that foreign copy and then suddenly wake up to find that some two-bit oil sheikh in the Persian Gulf is making life difficult for their readers and plunging America into a crisis. Where the hell is this place, anyway? Who is this little jerk? Isn't there some correspondent who knows this place? We can't go with the story without copy, can we? Get somebody there. Who can we get? Never mind—just get *somebody* out there to the Persian Gulf! Yeah, but where in the Persian Gulf? How the hell do I know where in the Persian Gulf—that's what correspondents are for, isn't it?

When the *Chicago Daily News* brought Keyes Beech home from Hong Kong, 30 years of experience in reporting the turbulence and the subtleties of the Asian scene disappeared from American journalism. One less reporter in the statistics but experience that will not be replaced in this century. Foreign reportage constantly needs new blood, new faces, new vision, new ideas, new vigor, new styles—a renewal of talent.

Attrition is working in its usual way on the postwar generation of foreign correspondents, the last romantic age in the business. There are good younger correspondents—not a lot, not nearly enough, because there are not a lot of jobs and the writers come and go and never stay around long enough. Publishers may solemnly swear that they intend to sustain things by regularly dispatching topflight assignment men from home to parachute in on the foreign scene. I wonder. Publishers used to have the conviction that their newspapers had to be on top of the news or ahead of the news, not just catching up with the news. Anyway, if the journalistic firemen do parachute in, they will look first for a tired, beat-up, cynical old hand, brooding lonely in the hotel bar, to get a quick fill-in on what's going on and who to see and how it all happened—if there are any old hands still around. ◉

Based in Paris, Don Cook is the European correspondent for the Los Angeles Times.

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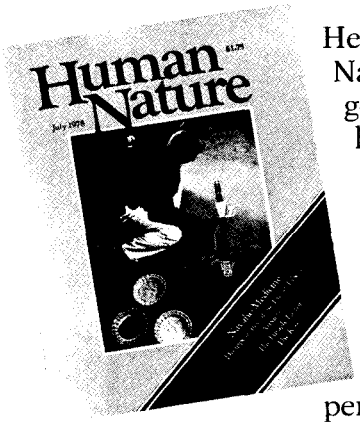

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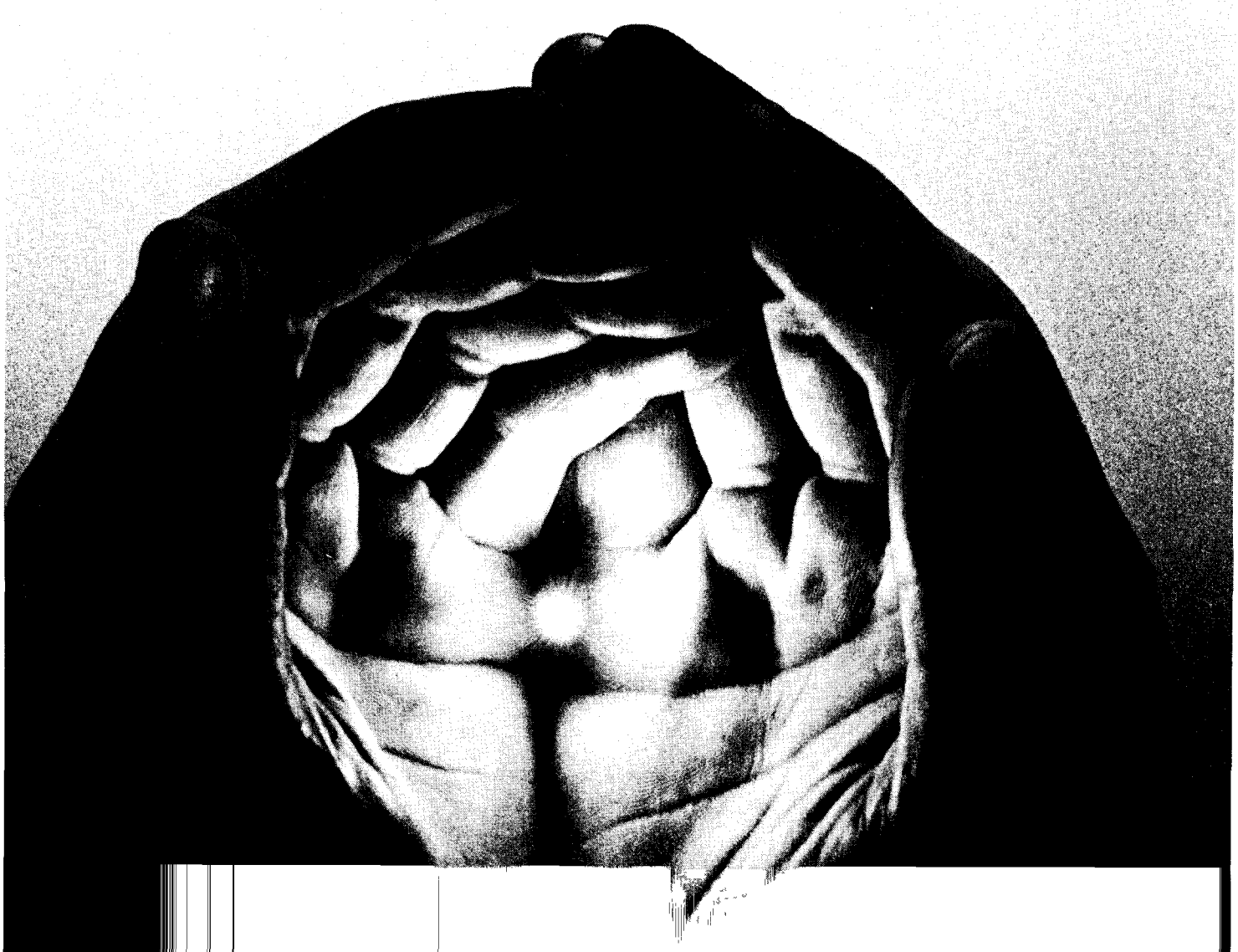

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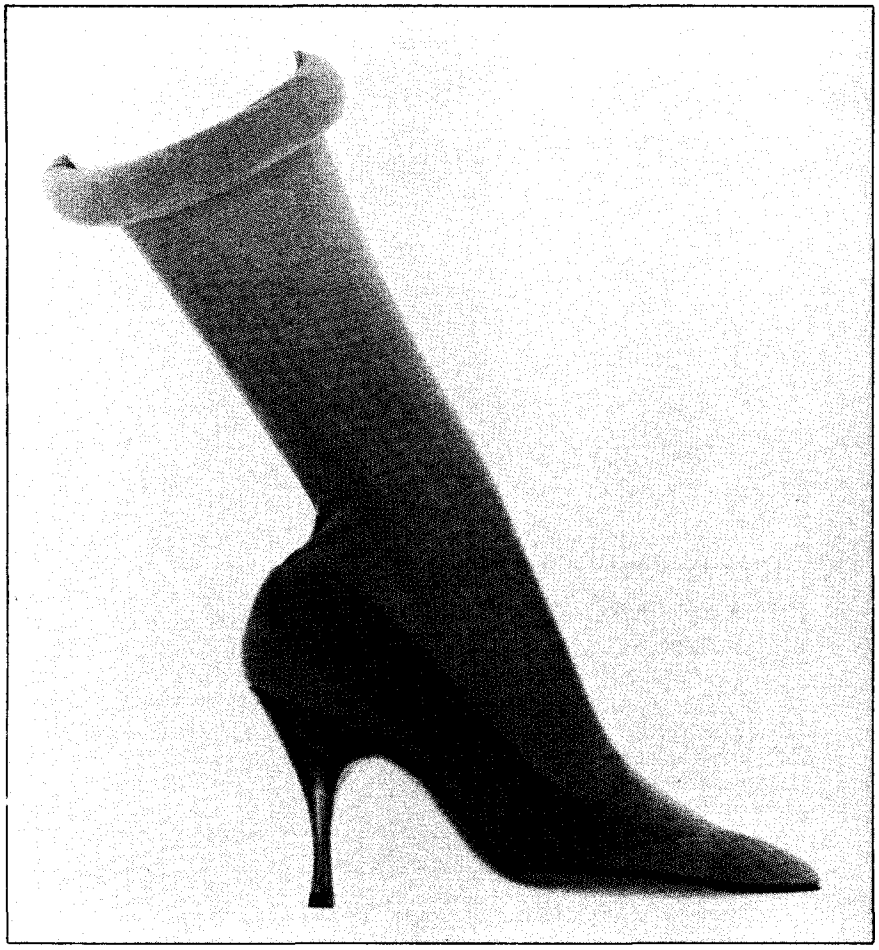
CELEBRATING THE AMERICAN FOOT

by Betty S. Cornfeld



Shoe with stocking, U.S., 1958.

TYPICALLY, museum events in New York these days are heralded by flapping banners appropriately emblazoned. But on West Fifty-third Street, two 30-foot-long pink legs pinched into black spike heel shoes dangle voluptuously over the Museum of Contemporary Crafts to announce "The Great American Foot" (TGAF) exhibition. Not since Claudette Colbert hitched a ride in *It Happened One Night* has the female leg had such an effect on traffic.

More than merely fun, of course, this sort of thematic, whimsical exhibition has become an increasing economic necessity for the museums of New York and of other cities around the country, both large and small. Endowments that seemed generous a few years ago today fall short of meeting operating expenses; entrance fees are now the order of the day and hence the need for box office attractions like TGAF.

TGAF, which originated in a smaller version at San Francisco's De Young Museum, is a funny, fanciful, and (in a TV quiz show sort of way) informative exhibition extolling the foot and its myriad coverings, both historical and fantastical. Though the sophisticated gallerygoer may well ask, "They're feet, but are they art?" it is worth pondering why people rarely ask, "It's art, but is it fun?"

From fancy French slippers to the crocheted socks that depict the story of Oz, from Fred Astaire's loafer (a misnomer if ever there was one) to a giant gym shoe, there's a lot to see, and most of it is unexpected.

The artist responsible for the gargantuan legs more or less gracing the museum is Ann Slavit, who designed them with the aid of a crew of fellow artists and one Massachusetts Institute of Technology engineer. And just inside the museum, in seamed stockings and stiletto heel pumps, is another pair of Slavit legs that disappear discreetly into the edges of a black skirt and a lacy slip that flutter from the ceiling.

The exhibition opens with a small retrospective of "historical foot coverings" spanning the sixteenth through the twentieth centuries. Though many of these shoes, boots, moccasins, and sandals covered other than American feet, most of them, at least until the early twentieth century, look like the kinds of shoes one imagines Californians wearing today. The first such delicate but decadent shoe in the march through time is a sixteenth-century Italian chopine, a style of platform shoe that rose to dizzying heights of as much as two feet. The exhibition's particular specimen is golden velvet and rises to a mere five and one half inches, bringing visions of a wearer who looked like Big Bird costumed for grand opera. Apparently, wearing chopines was such a precarious enterprise that ladies had to be supported by a brace of servants. (Compare the chopines with the platform shoes worn by the rock group Kiss, and

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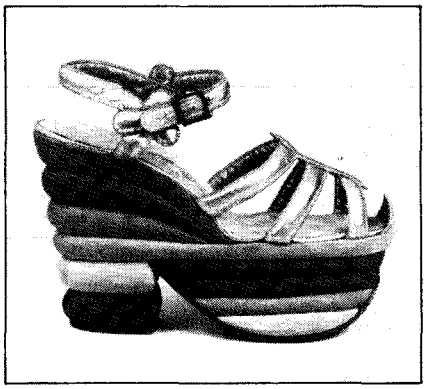
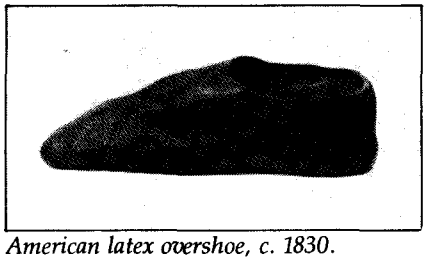


Ferragamo's kid-and-cork sandal, 1938.

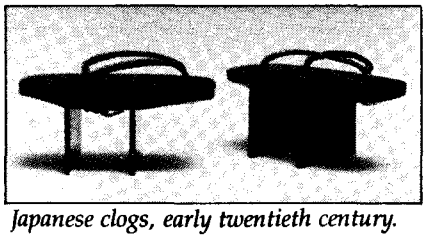
you'll see how little fashion really changes.)

Moving into the twentieth century, the shoes become ornate in an obvious, more humorous way. There's a fantastic Ferragamo platform shoe from 1938 that rises in rainbow tiers of suede and climaxes in gold straps. Seymour Troy's highly stylized 1940s pump, with its red trimming on blue kid, conjures up the coordinated padded-shoulder, single-button suit that must have been worn with it.



American latex overshoe, c. 1830.

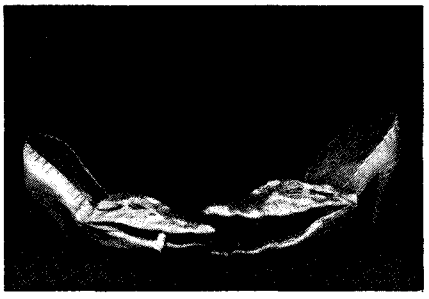
As an inspiration for artistic endeavor, the foot is a surprisingly fertile subject. TGAF includes a slide show appropriately titled "Feet in New York," by Frank Rispoli; such taped songs as "Tiptoe Through the Tulips," by triller Tiny Tim, and "Blue Suede Shoes," by Elvis; photographs; and arts and crafts. In a small room between floors is a video tape of Les Levine, the bottoms of his feet dripping with paint, dancing to a selection of oldies but goodies. Also located between floors is "Shoe Fetish Self



Japanese clogs, early twentieth century.

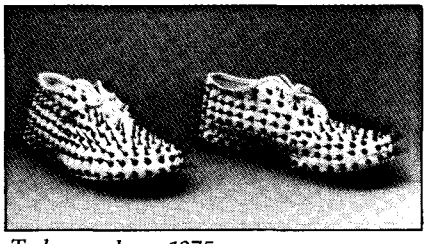
Portrait," by Jaye Lawrence, shoes whose toes and heels are shaped into forms that have a fascinating and an elusive eroticism.

One of the few visual puns in the show that succeed (there are many that don't) is Joe Bova's "Foothill," a large foot metamorphosed into a hill with roads running around it and tunneling through its heel. There are also two examples of the alligator shoe—Susan Nininger's pair, which are wonderfully sinuous and sinister, with bright-green serpentine tails curling out of the open backs, and E'wao Kagoshima's "High Heeled Dragon," in which two alligators stand eye to beady eye, one with a cigarette dangling from its teeth.



"High Heeled Dragon," 1975.

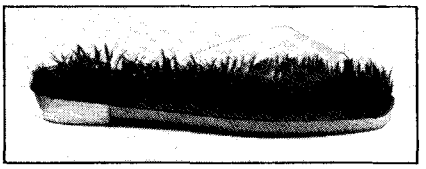
Ann Slavit is not the only artist to see the foot in a monumental way. Lawrence M. Williams's "Big Foot" is a Datsun-size megafoot made of polyester resin. Like something out of Woody Allen's *Sleeper*, it looms mysteriously in its corner, both humorous and menacing.



Tacky sneakers, 1975.

Given the rigors of such a singular theme, esoterica inevitably abounds. "Tap Shoe (Spatial Conference)," by Lukman Glasgow, is a hand resting palm up on a pedestal, one finger touching a high-heel shoe whose heel ends in a faucet. Erik Gronborg's "Bowl" begins as a stein (with an odalisque painted on it) and snuffles off into a sock. "A Tribute to Saint Anthony," by Bruce Guttin, is a wooden table supported by skeletal legs—femurs and

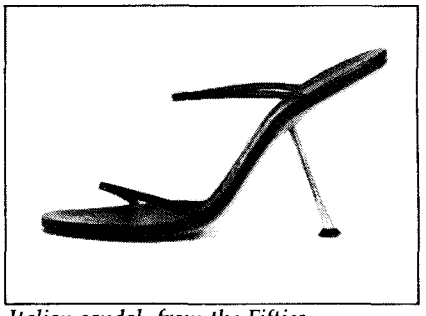
American laced slipper, 1880.



Plastic-grass sandal, late Sixties, U.S.

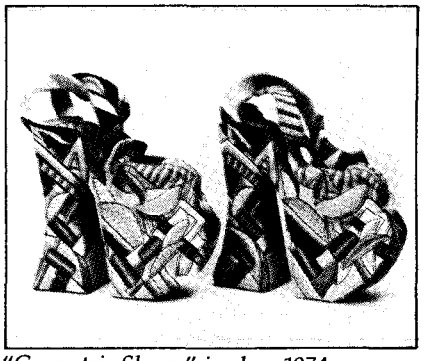
tibiae stuffed into thick socks and work boots. Karen Breschi's "Forest Lamp" has a large, brooding boot at its base that sprouts into a cestalike shape.

There is so much sculpture to look at in this show that the paintings, photographs, and drawings tend to be overlooked, instead of vice versa. In



Italian sandal, from the Fifties.

"Seascape #15," Tom Wesselmann, with one deftly placed blue line, transforms a foot into a torso. Andy Warhol's "Snake Shoe" is funny—you have to look at it for a bit before you can see what it is. Jasper Johns's "High School Days," a relief in lead of a wing-tip oxford with a small, round mirror on the toe, mystified me until a friend said that the strategic minimirror was commonly employed to gain a peek up dancing partners' dresses.



"Geometric Shoes," in clay, 1974.

If you appreciate Claes Oldenbourg and/or Red Grooms (the "Ruckus Manhattan" man), then you will appreciate "The Great American Foot." It belongs to the Tiffany Window School of Art—it may not be serious, but it is still art. Or some of it is anyway. ◉

Betty S. Cornfeld is a Manhattan-based free-lance magazine and television writer.

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ART EVENTS

God's Word Is Worth a Fortune

by Vicki Goldberg

By noon on April 7 it was standing room only at Christie's New York City branch. The television lights were fierce, though the seven TV cameras—one belonged to a German station—waited idly along the wall for a message from the Bible. Gutenberg's great book stayed silent behind glass in front of the room. It was open to "In the beginning was the Word. . . ."

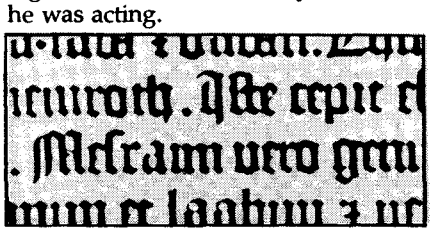
The morning auction had gone slowly. Bookdealers sedately bid up Renaissance pornography and religious manuscripts. A man from Philadelphia spent a lot of money by raising his chin imperiously each time he was willing to pay an extra hundred. An older dealer snoozed. The crowd kept quiet, waiting for the Gutenberg.

At one o'clock, a fifteenth-century book of hours was knocked down for $46,000. In an even voice, the auctioneer called the next lot. Abruptly, everyone shifted position and murmured: the Bible. When the auctioneer reminded the crowd that Christie's charges buyers a 10 percent premium on the purchase price, people just laughed, totting up 10 percent of a sale that was expected to net more than a million dollars.

The opening bid was half a million. The trustees of the General Theological Seminary, which was selling the Bible, frowned into their clerical collars. They had hoped that the bidding would open at a million. It had been hard enough to convince their people that the sale was necessary and would indeed provide the library with a handsome endowment. What if the book fetched a scant million and a half?

But the bidding reached a million in the blink of an eye and seconds later stood, quite literally, at a million and a half. John Jenkins, a dealer from Austin, Texas, who was representing the New York investment banking firm of Allen and Company, had gotten up from his seat to bid. He was still on his feet at one million six. But the bidding did not stop. Jenkins sat down with a sad little shake of his head. The bids continued to jump $100,000 at a nod. Warren Howell, a San Francisco dealer, made his first bid at one million seven and his last at one million nine. He was bidding for an anonymous American buyer, thought to be a private collector. At one million nine the auctioneer glanced over at the only other bidder, caught the nod, and said, "Two million dollars." He said it again, but Howell did not lift a finger. The gavel came down: "Two million dollars, to Martin Breslauer, Incorporated."

The crowd of bookdealers broke into delighted applause. "Magnificent," one said loudly. The Gutenberg had set a staggering record for an auctioned book in less than a minute. Dealers beamed at one another, as runners must have when Roger Bannister broke the four-minute mile. Bernard Breslauer, president of the New York rare book firm, was inundated by handshakers and reporters. A tidy gentleman who appeared to have polished his face, head, and spectacles for the occasion, Breslauer looked happy and stayed mum. Yes, he'd have gone a lot higher. No, he wouldn't say for whom he was acting.



Detail from the Gutenberg Bible.

He was bidding for the Stuttgart library, in West Germany. Though Stuttgart had no Gutenberg, its collection of Bibles was second only to the British Library's; it was bidding to become the equal of the British. The director of the Baden-Württemberg state library, located in Stuttgart, and the secretary of state were both at the auction, and the German television crew was on the scent of victory. To Breslauer's dismay, the Stuttgart press had leaked the news the day before the auction that the two officials were off to New York to buy the Bible for $2 million or more. "It was only by the grace of God that this report didn't reach other bidders," Breslauer said.

With the 10 percent buyer's premium, Breslauer had actually bid $2.2 million. Rumor had it that Stuttgart eventually paid $2.5 million, but all Breslauer would say was that the rumor was incorrect. Since the book was flown straight to Germany, there was no sales tax, though 8 percent would have done a lot for New York's budgetary crisis. (Stuttgart's Bible was really a lottery prize of sorts: It was bought with funds from the Baden-Württemberg state lottery, which exists to support the arts.)

The seminary's two-volume Bible, printed on paper (Gutenberg also printed a more expensive edition on vellum), was twice declared to be incomplete and once made whole again. In 1916, a sharp-eyed bookdealer announced that one leaf in the book of Ezekiel was an expert pen-and-ink copy. But then in 1953, Charles Scribner presented the missing printed leaf to the seminary. And so the book was thought complete till Maundy Thursday of this year, when two bibliographers checking it discovered a whopping printer's error: The verso of one page was printed on a second page as well, edging out Paul's Epistle to the Colossians altogether.

Gutenbergs, however, aren't valuable for their text. Printed before there was any scholarly investigation of the Bible, they are less useful for textual study than is an ordinary printed version of today. Their romance lies in their being first, as well as beautiful, with clean, regular columns and handsome type. For a couple of centuries, no one realized that these Bibles were the first to be printed—they have no title page, no printer's mark, no date. Then it was noted that the copy owned by Cardinal Mazarin contained handwritten notes dated August 1456, meaning that it had been printed earlier than any known dated volume.

Poor Gutenberg probably never even finished printing Stuttgart's new Bible. He went bankrupt—his partner suing him and taking over the entire printing shop. However, Gutenberg got a new backer and went on to print the so-called 36-line Bible, today much rarer than the 42-line, $2 million version. Ironically, it was Gutenberg's invention that made books cheap: Before his time they were so valuable that they could be pawned or rented, and libraries kept them chained to the shelves. Less than 10 years after Gutenberg printed the 42-line Bible, a printed Bible could be bought for as little as one tenth of the cost of a manuscript copy. But on April 7, one of the books that heralded the availability of books to the masses became the most expensive aristocrat of them all. ●

Vicki Goldberg is an art historian.

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THE MOVIES

A Slack and Sentimental "F.I.S.T."

by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.

UNITED ARTISTS' *F.I.S.T.* has not fared well among my colleagues. As everyone knows, this is Sylvester Stallone's first movie since *Rocky*. No doubt it invites the fate so commonly accorded to second novels. But I was drawn to it because it makes an effort to tell us things about American history that movies rarely bother with.

F.I.S.T. is Hollywood's second go this season at corruption in the American labor movement. *Blue Collar* was the first, and though livelier in spirit and atmosphere, it was at heart a cowardly film. Paul Schrader chose to make the notably incorrupt and civilized United Auto Workers his target, thereby ignominiously dodging the notably corrupt and vindictive Teamsters. *F.I.S.T.*—the initials stand for the Federation of Interstate Truckers—at least has the guts *Blue Collar* lacked. And the story of Jimmy Hoffa has genuine dramatic resonance: the young trade unionist, shaped in the bloody organizing battles of the 1930s, learning his trade from the idealistic Trotskyite Farrel Dobbs, then evolving into the labor boss of the 1950s—smooth, crooked, dictatorial, and in partnership with the mob. This is relatively unexplored territory (*Blue Collar* had no historical dimension) and could have been a remarkable movie.

Alas, it isn't. *F.I.S.T.* starts out well enough. The younger generation will perhaps not credit the savagery labor encountered 40 years ago in its struggle to organize the unorganized; and Norman Jewison, the director, brings it all back with power and without exaggeration. At the same time, one feels a certain uneasiness, especially when Jewison moves from events to people. The domestic scenes are derived not from life but from other movies—from the Warner Bros. films of proletarian comradeship in the Thirties, from films about the quaintness of the immigrant experience, from *The Godfather*, even from *Marty*. Watch Johnny Kovak (Stallone) courting the pretty Lithuanian girl and running the gauntlet of curious neighbors clustered on the steps. The scene is straight out of musical comedy and drains the film of the acrid sense of reality it requires.

The violence of the employers leads Johnny Kovak to invoke the counter-violence of gangsters. Soon the mob becomes an integral part of his machine; in time, he becomes an integral part of mob operations. There is something to that in the Hoffa case, though the use of the mob for organizing purposes was rather exceptional in the labor movement. What really brought organized crime into labor in a big way was the money floating around in union pension funds, along with the convenience of unions as covers for the shakedown of weak employers. At any rate, Kovak goes with the mob, defies the Senate Rackets Committee, and eventually is killed by the mob.

In its outline, this is an epic story of human corruption set against the backdrop of a great social movement. Why does *F.I.S.T.* fail? In part, I think, because it makes everything too easy. The writing is glib, banal, and perfunctory. One vaguely accepts the characters not because they talk and move with any life of their own but because one knows about Jimmy Hoffa. Though Stallone has real presence and is far from ineffective in the role, he remains an actor of limited resources. His attack is entirely external. He quite fails to illuminate the character from within, as the early Paul Muni or the young Marlon Brando would have done. The use of garish color heightens the pervading sense of unreality. This is a film that cried for black and white—the colors of the industrial city, the grim colors of industrial strife. The black-and-white newspaper advertisement showing Stallone and the workers on the march is far more compelling than the scene as prettified in color for the screen.

Most of all, there is a moral muddle in the film's core. When Kovak profanely defies the Senate Rackets Committee, the audience in an East Side New York movie house burst into applause. Maybe those moviegoers confused Kovak with the character Stallone played in his earlier film and thought they were seeing *Mr. Rocky Goes to Washington*. For whatever reason, the audience appeared to regard the labor racketeer as a hero. Presumably this is not the point Jewison planned to make, though he does go to inordinate lengths to suggest that for all his frailties Kovak remained a good guy underneath. But Jimmy Hoffa was not an innocent who stumbled into the underworld in his zeal to get a better life for the workers. He was a brutal, cynical, greedy man who dug his own grave and earned his fate. The real and terrible story is systematically destroyed in this slack and sentimental movie.

CAT AND MOUSE is a three-year-old Claude Lelouch movie belatedly released by Quartet Films in the United States. The older generation will recall with nostalgia *Quai des Brumes*, that film of 40 years ago in which the shots of Michele Morgan standing forlornly in her trench coat in the rain seemed to sum up the defeatist mood of the Third Republic. Now she is a handsome, humorous, middle-aged woman, and her presence gives Lelouch's wildly confusing but splendidly entertaining thriller a pleasurable distinction.

Morgan plays a woman suspected of murdering her husband, a thought that indeed had passed through her mind. A couple of detectives, admirably acted by Serge Reggiani and Philippe Leotard, pursue the case. Political interference from above complicates the pursuit: The government for its own reasons wishes to blame the murder on left-wing terrorists. One twist of plot succeeds another, thereby overbuilding expectations—for the final twist is a disappointment. But Lelouch directs with arrogant confidence; the characters are sharply and economically individualized; the atmosphere of pervading trickery is deftly rendered; and the film provides an entirely pleasant evening. ●

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THEATER

The Unhappy Demise of "The Mighty Gents"

by Martin Gottfried

ON A WARM EVENING late last spring, a group of no more than 50 theatergoers rose to give a standing ovation at the conclusion of *The Last Street Play*. It was a drama of artistry, of overwashing emotional power. The work was written by Richard Wesley, who is one of America's most talented and fastest developing young playwrights. Wesley is also black, and his plays have been about black people. The era of black pride, the generations of oppression, and every writer's inclination to write about his own experiences have led Wesley to "write black," making him a "black playwright."

Perhaps it is a sign of hypocrisy rather than of wisdom, but we do not ordinarily identify our artists by race or religion—the white wood-carver, the Catholic composer. Race is not one's essential quality; one's self is. An artist, like any other regular human being, is not defined by race or religion.

In the theater, however, we have been insisting on setting black work apart. *The Wiz*, for example, is not a musical but a "black musical." It was produced, and audiences buy tickets for it, with that fact very much in mind. Does that not make it a "black show"—a show of black bodies? There have been few successful *plays* about black people. It seems, inescapably, that everyone—including blacks, ironically—wants to see black performers sing and dance.

This is all wrong, and for 46 different reasons. Theater must be theater, judged on artistic grounds alone, whatever the data of the author and his subject. The race of a play's characters is not relevant to the nature or the quality of the work, nor ought it be a reason to buy or not to buy a ticket. The price of a ticket bought for an all-black show is bargain-basement slave trade. Wesley's play should have gone a long way to reforming this situation. It should have established him as a major playwright, not a black one. It was first class from the only point of view that matters—the artistic one. It represented Broadway's latest and best chance to present a drama about blacks of such excellence that audiences of all races would go because of the play and for that reason only. For *The Last Street Play* was brought to Broadway this season, renamed *The Mighty Gents*.

Unfortunately, more than a new title happened along the way. The author was encouraged to tighten up the play and in the process lost important details. Fine leading actors were replaced by better known, more experienced, and—as it turned out—less effective ones. The theater that was engaged had a stage much too big for the play's intimacy and focus. Yet even these things did not crucially detract from the power and artistry of *The Mighty Gents*. It is still an overwhelming experience. Or *was*—for it closed one week after receiving good reviews. *Good* reviews.

Wesley's play is set in the past and the present of a Newark slum. The members of a street gang called The Mighty Gents are now thirtyish. They had momentarily developed manly pride as youngsters, roaming their "territory" and making love to their girl gang, The Debs. Now they are living in the reality of their manhood—a reality of unemployment and futility, a reality that denies them manhood. They are society's exiles, uneducated, unskilled blacks hidden away in the Harlems of America. They are stranded on street corners, drinking cheap wine and looking at cars. Their youth's exuberance has devolved into adult despair.

None of them is more aware of this reality than Frankie, the leader of The Mighty Gents. Frankie is no fool. He knows a revolving door when he is caught in one. He is reminded of his plight every time he looks at his wife, Rita, as she sits and rocks her life away, knitting in the hope of "at least accomplishing one thing in my life." She is never to finish the knitting.

These archetypes of ghetto figures are consumed by hopelessness. There are only two escapes open to them, which the play makes incarnate. One is Zeke, a babbling, trembling wino. The other is Braxton, a pimp. Zeke is the play's Chorus, demanding to be recognized as alive, demanding that even the most pathetic victim of slum degradation be granted respect. In a soliloquy of searing power, he recounts a tale about a group of junkies who overdosed en masse in an abandoned tenement. Hoping to give dignity at least to their corpses, he propped them up as if alive, crossing their legs and even putting cigarettes in their mouths. Coming upon them later, he found them being devoured by rats. Rather than leave their bodies to such humiliation, he set the building afire.

Such imagery is powerful, and its implications, I should think, are clear. The junkies represent the ghetto poor—the young who can escape a present without future only by addicting themselves into nodding stupors. Yet, this fable insists, even in such a state, they must be recognized as people and not rejected as the detritus of the whiteworld. Braxton, on the other hand, is the servant of that whiteworld. He is evil itself—the pimp, the cheap gangster who is given his gaudy pittance of cars and clothes in exchange for keeping Harlem *in* Harlem. Whites do not want to be reminded of slums and junkies and people bound by futility. Braxton makes certain that world stays hidden.

In a last attempt to regain the manhood he'd tasted as a Mighty Gent, Frankie leads the gang on one final raid: an assault on Braxton. It is to be the end of Frankie. He dies in the gutter, and his body is stripped by his scavenging friends. The slum cycle makes rats even of its own.

What Wesley has written is a fiery allegory about America's Harlems; he has drawn to mythical pitch the profound tragedy of a people being stifled in spirit and in fact. In writing terms, his work is superb. The poetry is not self-serving but directs itself to dramatic purpose, and the use of metaphor is knowing. The structure of the play is precise, working the difficult ground between naturalism and surrealism. The characters achieve human proportion despite the unrealistic tone. Unlike modern drama, which has alienated contemporary audiences with its sterility and abstraction, *The Mighty Gents* restores humanism to the stage.

The Mighty Gents is what audiences have traditionally sought in drama. Bút Broadway audiences no longer throng to serious plays. To be a hit today, a drama must be flamboyant—*Equus*, *Dracula*—and let content be damned. Such plays are musicals without music for audiences wanting mindless, gut reactions. A play with the depth and artistry of *The Mighty Gents* has no place on today's Broadway, no way to reach audiences as it did those 50 theatergoers last spring, especially not when it is a "black play." This is the Broadway melody of 1978. ◉

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TELEVISION

Lou Grant Redux

by Karl E. Meyer

WHEN LOU GRANT was fired in the closing episode of *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* last year, it did not seem likely that he or the show would enjoy a successful reincarnation. In fact, he has been recalled to life in what I regard as one of the more interesting programs in a lackluster season—the first dramatic series to deal compellingly with the grub as well as the glitter of newspaper work.

After a slow start in a difficult time period—10 to 11 P.M. (EST) on Tuesday nights (now on Mondays, in the same time slot)—*Lou Grant*, as the show is called, began a steady climb in the ratings and finished in the top 20, meaning that the series is now assured a second season on CBS. If producer Gene Reynolds, of the MTM workshop, maintains program quality, Grant may wind up as the most influential tutor of journalism in the country.

Ed Asner, who portrays Grant, has a face right out of the *Gnomes* book and a hard-soft manner that anyone who has been a cub reporter will instantly recognize. He seems more at home as city editor of *The Tribune* than in his old job as the producer of a television news program in Minneapolis. It now seems clear that Grant is at heart a print journalist and was only a temporary exile in the land of tubes.

In moving west to Los Angeles, both Grant and the show have undergone a travel change. The program is not a comedy. Within the restricting limits of prime time entertainment, *Lou Grant* attempts to deal seriously with the unglamorous realities of newspaperdom: political and advertising pressures; the perils of newspaper-chain take-overs; proprietary whimsy; and the three deadly Cs of the city room: careerism, competitiveness, and callousness.

The Tribune is very much like any big-city daily. The scenes of the daily news conference—one of the last redoubts of locker room masculinity—are uncannily good. The rivalry between editors for page one play is convincingly reproduced, along with the gallows humor jocularity in which a mass murder turns into a below-the-fold muttbox (In one of the show's few slips, a character used the inadmissible expression *front page*, when the correct term, as every initiate in the newsroom soon learns, is *page one*.)

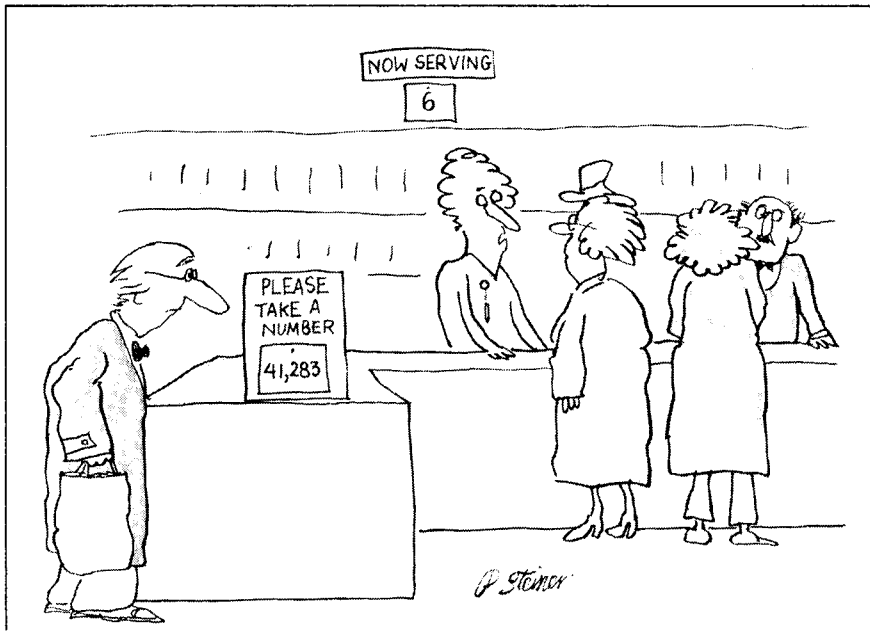
Best of all, *Lou Grant* tries to examine the peculiar psychological nexus between the reporter and the newsworthy tragedy. Bad news sells newspapers and makes professional reputations; it also puts the reporter in the vulturelike position of exploiting misfortune for commercial and careerist purposes.

This troubling, omnipresent hazard was effectively dramatized in a program dealing with the suicide of the leader of the local American Nazi party. One of *The Tribune*'s ambitious but shy reporters, Billie Newman, gets Grant's permission to attend a Nazi party meeting, and she becomes curious about the gauleiter, who calls himself Stryker. Billie discovers that Stryker is in fact Jewish and that his real name is Sturner; when journalist confronts Nazi, he first threatens and then begs her not to expose his non-Aryan parentage. With Grant's encouragement, Billie tells the whole story in a page one takeout, and within hours of publication, Stryker kills himself. (Sturner has a real-life parallel in an American Nazi leader who committed suicide a few years ago, when his Jewish ancestry was disclosed by a newspaper.)

Billie Newman, capably played by Linda Kelsey, blames herself for having all but murdered an obviously pathetic human being. In tones that every young reporter will recognize, Grant reassures her that she has showed courage in braving Stryker's threats, that the Nazi would have destroyed himself anyway, and that a higher purpose was served by giving readers an insight into the dark recesses of our nature.

All of this may be true, but Newman also knows that she has won points in her rivalry with her colleagues—most especially with the obnoxious Joe Rossi, an aspiring Woodstein in the newsroom. Rossi, like all of the cast, seems cut from the matrix of actuality and is immediately recognizable as the reporter who would turn in his grandmother on a morals charge in order to win a Pulitzer Prize. Robert Walden as Rossi has caught to perfection the swagger that masks an insecurity feeding on page one by-lines.

In a telltale closing fillip, Newman meets Rossi in the elevator. "Hey," he says, "congratulations on that Nazi story. It was so good I thought a man wrote it." Newman informs Rossi that his day's contribution was also so good that she too had thought a man had written it. As an old hand, I think I can say that if Billie Newman sticks with it, she'll grow a thick carapace, impervious to tears. She'll probably become a first-rate reporter and a not very admirable human being—which is one of the real perils of the newspaper craft. I hope that in its second season, *Lou Grant* will apply even more Balzac to an excessively romanticized calling. ◉



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RABBIT

DASHER

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PLAGIARISM AND OUR RUBBERY COPYRIGHT LAWS

by Harry Zehner

"READ TASSO, and you think of Virgil; read Virgil, and you think of Homer; and Milton forces you to reflect how narrow are the limits of human invention," said Emerson. Of course, Virgil did not have to worry about infringing on Homer's copyright, but one look at recent accusations of literary "borrowing"—against Alex Haley's *Roots*, Gail Sheehy's *Passages*, Norman Mailer's *Marilyn*, Lady Pamela Harlech's *Feast Without Fuss*, and *Paul Bocuse's French Cooking*—suggests that the limits of human invention have become even more narrow than Emerson might have suspected.

In theory, it has always been relatively easy to prove a case of literary plagiarism. Essentially, three factors must be weighed: validity of the copyright, access of the borrower to the copyrighted work, and "substantial similarity" between the two works.

In practice, however, only the first of these principles can be demonstrated with facility. The flexible, protean character of the law makes the access and substantial similarity questions highly subjective criteria in court. Realizing the law's fuzziness in this area, many authors—some big, big names among them—sail awfully close to the wind. Their credo might be summed up thus:

1. If you plan to use a lot of material verbatim, make sure that the book is in the public domain. The new law sets the duration of a copyright as the life of the author plus 50 years.
2. When going verbatim, borrow a little from lots of sources.
3. Once you've plagiarized, you have three years to sweat out the possibility of prosecution for copyright infringement. After that, the statute of limitations expires, and you're home free.

It should be remembered that although the copyright law protects writers from the theft of their work, it does not protect readers from ripped-off or unoriginal writing.

Alas, the only effective defense against most literary copycats is public exposure and embarrassment, which is why critics and the press must be constantly vigilant. ◉

ONE EXAMPLE of how closely a successful writer can "resemble" other writers and still maintain a reputation for originality is the case of Stephen Birmingham, a social historian.

Below are verbatim samples from his books *The Grandees* and *Real Lace* followed by earlier, surprisingly similar "sources."

Stephen Birmingham, *The Grandees* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), pp. 42–43:

"The Inquisition was first suggested to the king and queen by the Dominican prior of Saint Paul in Seville, backed by the papal nuncio, Nicolao Franco. The king and queen agreed, it is said, 'reluctantly' that an 'inquisition,' or inquiry, be undertaken, but placed the leadership of it in the hands of the great Cardinal of Spain, the Archbishop of Seville, Pero González de Mendoza, who assured their majesties that the approach to Judaizing 'Conversos' would be evangelical—through education, argument, and preaching, rather than force. But the lower clergy, the lesser nobles, and the general public quickly became impatient with the cardinal's gentle ways and called for sterner measures. Of the cardinal's methods, the historian Andrés Bernáldez wrote: 'In all this, two years were wasted and it was of no avail, for each did what he used to do, and to change one's habits is a wrench as bad as death.' In 1479, the king and queen—still reluctant—gave in to the popular pressures and founded the Inquisition."

Salvador de Madariaga, *Christopher Columbus* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1940), p. 129:

"The Inquisition was first suggested to the King and Queen in 1477 by a Dominican, the Prior of St. Paul in Seville, strongly backed by the papal nuncio Nicolao Franco. The King and Queen yielded, reluctantly, but, as Henry IV had done before them, they asked the great Cardinal of Spain, the Archbishop of Seville, Pero González de Mendoza, to undertake an 'inquisition,' i.e. an enquiry. The aristocratic Cardinal applied evangelical methods—preaching, persuasion, schools. But the people, the monks, the lower clergy, were certainly of the opinion set down by Bernáldez: 'In all this, two years were wasted and it was of no avail, for each did what he used to do; and to change one's habits is a wrench as bad as death.' In 1479 the King and Queen yielded to popular pressure and founded the Inquisition."

Birmingham, p. 42:

"Peter, it was said, used to wear a waistband given him by his wife, Doña Blanca, who wanted to expel the Jews. His mistress, Doña María de Padilla, obtained the waistband with the help of an old Jew who was powerful at court, and the Jew placed a curse on it so that the next time Peter wore it—at a court ceremony, when he was in his full regalia—the waistband suddenly turned into a serpent and, before the eyes of the horrified onlookers, coiled itself around the king's neck and strangled him."

De Madariaga, p. 133:

"Peter used to wear a waistband given him by his wife, Doña Blanca, who wanted to expel the Jews from the realm. His neglected mistress, Doña María de Padilla, secured the waistband

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with the help of an old Jew, very powerful at court, Simuel Ha-Levi, and this Jew bewitched it so that the next time Peter wore it—it was during a Court ceremony, when he was in his regal attire—the waistband turned into a serpent which, to the horror of all those present, coiled itself round the King's neck."

Birmingham, p. 39:

"It was Don Selemoh who served as the intermediary in the presentation of a magnificent golden necklace to Isabella, Ferdinand's engagement gift, purchased, of course, with Jewish money."

De Madariaga, p. 130:

"...and Don Selemoh of Aragon, who presented Isabel with a magnificent golden necklace, which Ferdinand had bought, of course, with Jewish money."

Stephen Birmingham, *Real Lace* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), p. 246:

"De Sica and his producer, Peter Dragadze, went to London to film British nobles of the order doing menial work, even emptying bedpans in St. John's Hospital, and from there flew to Belfast to follow the Knights' ambulance unit as it tended casualties of Northern Ireland's riots.... In Germany, the Knights sponsor a nationwide ambulance corps with 24,000 aristocratic and unpaid volunteers, and in South Vietnam, throughout the war, they administered a team of fifty-two doctors. Although many of the Knights and Dames of the order are elderly and infirm, they are all expected to lend a personal hand in the operation of the 150 hospitals and other medical services the order maintains. 'When you put a rich man to work for five days in an ambulance, it transforms him,' says Count Wolfgang von Bellestrem, the German jurist who oversees the order's medical work, succinctly expressing the order's feelings of noblesse oblige."

Newsweek, p. 71:

"Last week, De Sica and his producer, Peter Dragadze, were in London filming British nobles who belong to the order at work in St. John's hospital. From there, the moviemakers hope to fly to Belfast to follow the Knights' ambulance unit as it tends the casualties of Northern Ireland's perennial riots.... In Germany, the Knights sponsor a nationwide ambulance corps with 24,000 unpaid volunteers and in South Vietnam they administer a team of 52 doctors. Although many of the order's knights (and dames) are elderly, they are expected to lend a personal hand in the operation of the 150 hospitals and other medical services the order maintains. 'When you put a rich man to work for five days in an ambulance, it transforms him,' says Count Carl Wolfgang von Bellestrem, a German jurist who oversees the order's medical work.

"This sense of noblesse oblige, however, is all..."

Birmingham, p. 245:

"After Suleiman the Magnificent and his Turkish fleet drove the Knights from Rhodes in 1522, the Knights took over the island of Malta and fended off, almost singlehandedly, the advance of Islam into Christian Europe. But the Reformation and the rise of European nationalism eventually stripped the order of

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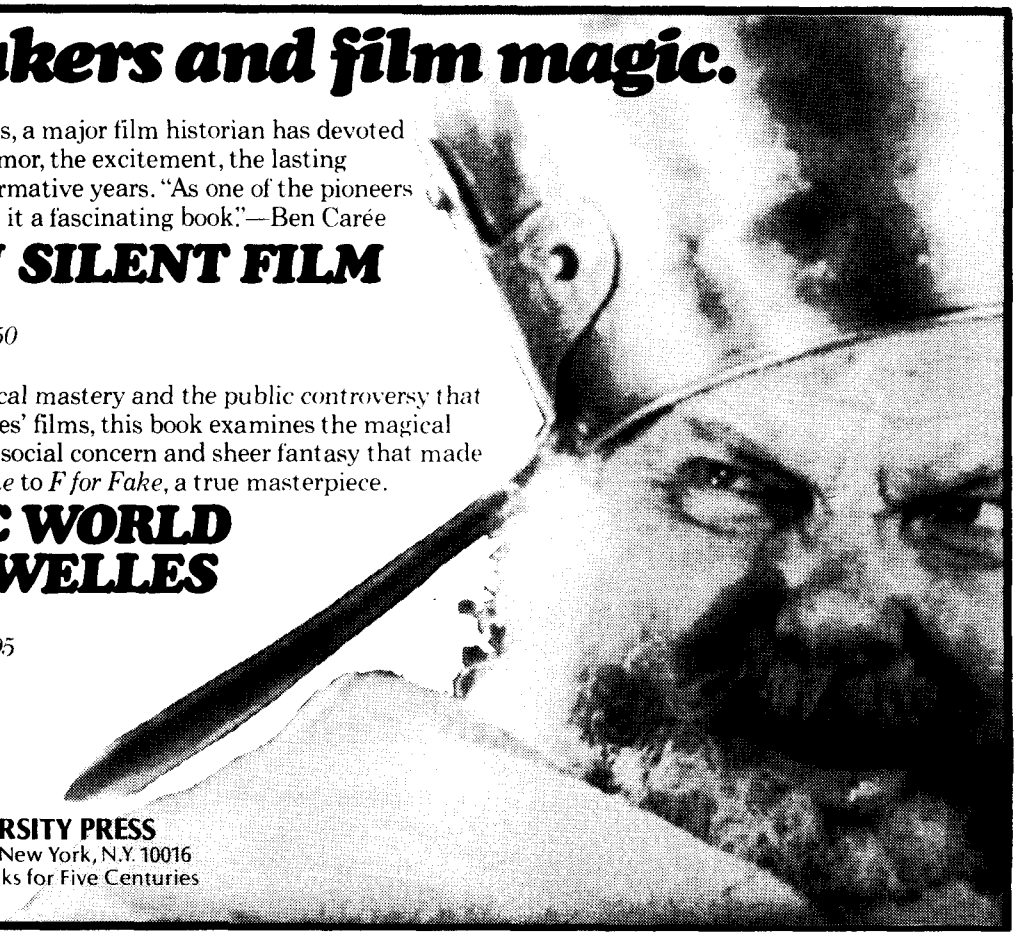

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its temporal power, and the Papacy was more or less forced to take its bold defenders back under the shelter of its wing."

Newsweek, July 13, 1970, p. 71:
"After Suleiman the Magnificent and his Turkish fleet drove them from Rhodes in 1522, the Knights took over the island of Malta and fended off, almost singlehandedly, the advance of Islam into Christian Europe. ...The Reformation and the rise of European nationalism, however, eventually destroyed the order's temporal power, and the papacy was forced to take its bold defenders back under its wing."

Birmingham, p. 244:
"...the order has striven to preserve at least a certain amount of the grandeur and elegant trappings of ancient aristocracy. Ever since the Knights captured the island of Rhodes from the Byzantine Empire in 1309, the Holy See has recognized the 'sovereign' character of the order, a designation that permits it to have an unusual degree of independence from local officials of the Church. At the Knights' headquarters on the Via Condotti in Rome, the Knights' scarlet-and-white banner flies over a huge palazzo which the Italian police regard as having extraterritorial rights—a nation of its own, like Vatican city—and some thirty-five foreign nations maintain full diplomatic relations with the order."

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Harry Zehner is an associate professor of English at Marymount College, Tarrytown, New York.

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Defiance in the Gulag

The Gulag Archipelago Three
by Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn
Harper & Row, 558 pp., $16.95

Reviewed by Adam B. Ulam

ANOTHER BOOK about Soviet forced labor camps! One can easily visualize a prospective buyer reaching for *The Gulag Archipelago Three*, the latest volume of Solzhenitsyn's epic of cruelty and suffering, and then somewhat guiltily replacing it on the bookstore shelf. Not again! Hasn't the writer told us enough about this mournful subject? And isn't Solzhenitsyn, well, somewhat reactionary? Witness his insistence that the West's own sins of omission and commission are rather trifling compared to what has been taking place under the Soviet system. He tries to make us feel guilty about feeling so guilty about the West and capitalism. In his view, we should be paying attention to what has been the real evil of our days. After all, we must learn to live with the Soviet Union and communism, and it is rather irritating to be told so often and so insistently that the Western intellectual's attempt to be fair minded about the whole business is in fact a form of moral escapism.

And indeed, Solzhenitsyn is unsparing in his references to his favorite bêtes noires in the West: "All you freedom-loving 'left thinkers' in the West. You left laborites, you progressive American, German and French students—as far as you are concerned, none of this amounts to much. As far as you are concerned, this whole book of mine is a waste of effort!" Of course the book is far from being a diatribe against the Western Left or even against communism. Nor is *Archipelago Three* just another installment of the tale of horrors of forced labor camps. The author is too scrupulous a chronicler to let his biases crowd out the historical truth or to replace it by preaching and too good an artist to let his story become dull or repetitive. In contrast to the first two volumes, which recount in horrifying detail the enslavement and passive suffering of a whole nation, this book is intended by the author to disclose "a space of freedom and struggle." *Archipelago Three* is the story of how people fight back against the inhuman system; how prisoners, braving hopeless odds, keep escaping from their camps; how a whole camp, profiting from the confusion following Stalin's death, rises and holds the authorities at bay for 40 days; and how the people of a sizable city, Novocherkassk, rebel in Khrushchev's time and have to be put down by the military. It is now an account not only of the regime's crimes and of the people's submissiveness but of a new spirit of defiance that has appeared on the Soviet scene since Stalin's death. As yet, these are isolated incidents that almost invariably end in defeat and tragedy: The escapees are recaptured; the Kengir camp rebellion and the Novocherkassk uprising are put down with brutality reminiscent of the Stalinist methods. Tragic as such stories are, the author believes they still offer comfort and hope: Sixty years of communism have not eradicated the Russian people's need for freedom and their capacity to struggle against oppression.

Solzhenitsyn is not fatuously optimistic. There is a new spirit in the Soviet land and a realization that it is not preordained that the Soviet people must always be enslaved. But this spirit and realization are far from a guarantee of a different and better future. What is important to Solzhenitsyn is that there are now millions of people who, like himself, have been able to throw off the ideological shackles because of their experiences. The physical oppression of the Communist regime has freed them from the deadening effect of the official dogma and endowed them with real comprehension of what it is to be a man, what it means to be free. "I am proud to belong to this mighty race. We were not a race, but they made us one. They forged bonds between us, which we in our timid and uncertain twilight, where every man is afraid of every other, could never have forged ourselves." Here Solzhenitsyn paraphrases Tolstoy's famous saying that anyone who has not been in jail does

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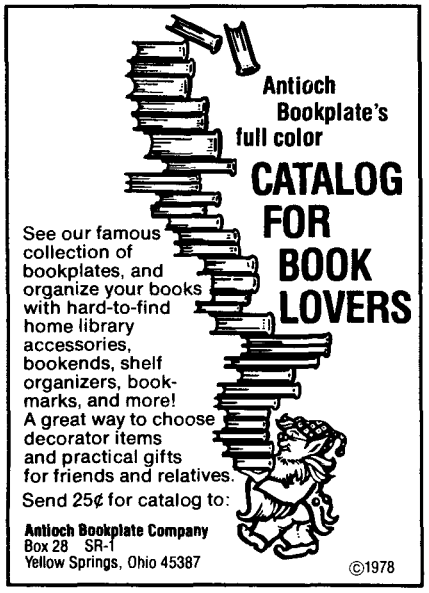
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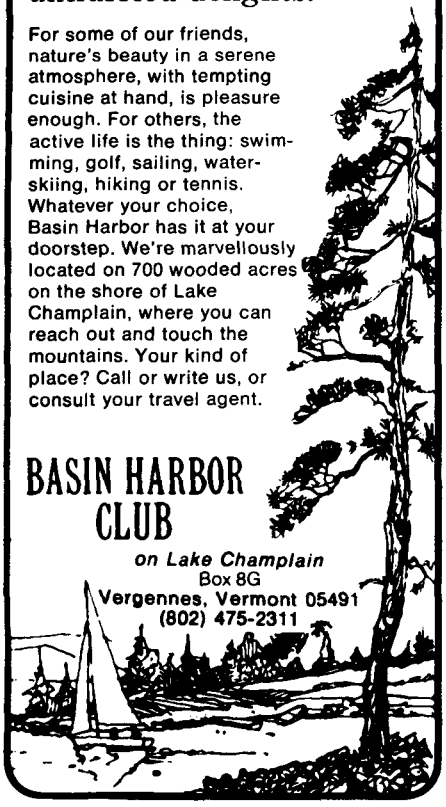

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not know what the state is. Being in Soviet jails taught him and countless others what communism really is, and not unnaturally, he is derisive of those in the West who, without having undergone a similar experience, argue confidently that communism is or can be different.

Though enormously important, this spiritual emancipation is but the first step. Solzhenitsyn is a political realist and knows Russian history. Tolstoy wrote that if enough people could learn to think and to say, "For me, there is no state," political oppression would disappear. Yes, our author would rejoin, that was true of the old czarist autocracy, but just try it with this terrifying mechanism of political controls and repression that is the Communist state: "The Communist regime has not been overthrown in sixty years, not because there has not been a struggle against it from inside, not because people docilely surrendered to it, but because it is inhumanly strong, in a way as yet unimaginable in the West."

Well, the last statement is not quite fair. Robert Conquest's little book *Kolyma: The Arctic Death Camp* (Viking, 256 pages, $10.95) is a reminder that there has been quite a body of literature in the West that has studied the Soviet Union realistically and that has been quite persuasive in demonstrating how "inhumanly strong" the Communist regime has been. Conquest purports to describe just one "island"—a large one, to be sure—in the Gulag Archipelago, the Kolyma complex of labor camps in northern Siberia. According to Conquest's calculations, this complex contained a total of three and a half million prisoners during the years 1932 to 1953, and "we may take it that Kolyma cost three million lives." The last figure seems to me to be rather high, but let us be very conservative and say that "only" one million died as the consequence of working in the mines and forests—where temperatures often went below −50°F—of being packed like cattle into flimsy barracks, and of the barbaric treatment meted out by the guards. What is incontestable is the author's assertion that in any single year after 1938 Kolyma held more prisoners than "the maximum number ever held in [czarist] prisons of all types throughout Russia (183,949 in 1912)." Conquest also reminds us of something we often overlook or forget: that a great majority of political prisoners arrested under Stalin were completely innocent even of passive resistance against the regime. Indiscriminate terror was simply believed by Stalin to be an effective way of solidifying his grip on Soviet society and of making any dissent not only impossible but unimaginable. Yes, a regime must be very strong to do such things to its people and not only stay in power but grow in might and prestige throughout the world.

AND SO for all the hope that Solzhenitsyn's story is supposed to convey, there is, if no despair, then stark realism in his conclusion about Russia's condition today: "For half a century and more, the enormous state has towered over us, girded with hoops of steel. The hoops are still there. There is no law." *Archipelago Three* was finished in 1968, and by that time Solzhenitsyn had altered his previously favorable opinion of the man who by allowing *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* to be published was in a sense responsible for the writer's literary career and fame. How much Khrushchev could have accomplished, yet in the end how little the system changed under his rule. "He never carried anything to its conclusion—least of all the fight for freedom." Again, this is not quite fair. To be sure, it was far from Khrushchev's intention to modify the system in any fundamental respect; yet he undoubtedly helped to make it more humane and probably unwittingly enabled dissent to sink its roots into Soviet society. The author's disenchantment with Khrushchev also reflects his general disappointment with post-Stalin Russia—with the fact that all the revelations about the horrors of the past did not lead to stronger popular reactions and that, most depressing of all, the young do not seem to be terribly agitated about the past: "The majority of young people could not care less whether we have been rehabilitated or not, whether twelve million people are still inside or are inside no longer.... Just so long as they themselves are at liberty with their disheveled girl friends. A fish does not campaign against fisheries—it only tries to slip through the mesh." Well, perhaps Solzhenitsyn could be comforted by the fact that this insouciance of the young also worries the party hierarchy. And in the long run, who knows—it might become as much of a danger to the regime as are the more explicit forms of dissent.

So the underlying motif of *Archipelago Three* is a dialogue between hope and disenchantment, between the author's pride in being one of a people that has suffered so much and yet has been able to endure and remain great and his contrition at being a Russian:

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What other nation has allowed itself to be so oppressed while at the same time oppressing other nations? Solzhenitsyn feels embarrassed in the presence of Lithuanians and Estonians because as a Russian he shares the responsibility for the enslavement of their homelands. Yet he cannot quite reconcile himself to the possibility that the Ukraine may one day choose to become fully independent. Surely, he believes, the Ukrainians will eventually realize that it is in their interest to maintain a *free* association with their Russian brothers. All of which is very honest, very human, and very Russian.

Archipelago Three is not a philosophical disquisition or a political treatise. It is a book about people. The writer's soliloquy links together the separate tales of individual nobility and depravity, of bravery and ingenuity, and of despair and helplessness in the face of a hostile environment. We meet real men and women. Some of them have been corrupted, but others have never given up the struggle against the demeaning system. Several of the stories are told with the power and artistry reminiscent of *One Day*: They reach out beyond Soviet reality and into the realm of universal human experience.

Solzhenitsyn has now finished writing about the *Gulag Archipelago*, he states, not because he has told the whole story "but because I cannot spend any more of my life on it." Let others take up the task so that one of history's most tragic and instructive chapters does not become forgotten. His appeal is mostly to other former inmates of the camps, though he undoubtedly will welcome Conquest's unemotional and factual description of what was probably the most infamous of the archipelago's islands. Beyond the facts, the English author also makes us see how the Stalinist past continues to remain the central problem of Soviet politics. It cannot be obscured or made to disappear through the passage of time or through the Soviet leaders' foreign and domestic successes. Stalin made a whole nation an accomplice in his crimes; his current successors have tried to make the whole Soviet society a partner in their conspiracy of silence about the past. For as long as this past is not fully exposed and denounced, it will continue as a standing indictment of the system and of the men who direct it. ◉

Adam B. Ulam, author of Stalin: The Man and His Era *and* In the Name of the People, *is a professor of government at Harvard and a research associate at the Russian Research Center.*

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Muddying the Waters of Faith

Janus: A Summing Up
by Arthur Koestler
Random House, 368 pp., $10

Reviewed by
Robert Claiborne

EVERY GENERATION or so our society goes through a spell of believing in fairies, or reasonable facsimiles thereof. Currently, tens of millions of Americans, many of them literate, regularly consult their zodiacal signs for guidance; others, seeing the fault not in their stars but in themselves, seek salvation in Rolfing, est-ing, or the ministrations of assorted gurus. ESP and psychokinesis again raise their phantasmagoric heads, while UFOs and chariots of the gods promise us close encounters with what looks suspiciously like the Second Coming. As a nation, we seem to be back with St. Augustine's *credo quia absurdum*, but with a veritable smorgasbord of absurdities to choose from.

Arthur Koestler also believes in fairies—more accurately, perhaps, in miracles. He believes in Lamarckism (the inheritance of acquired characteristics), vitalism, and various other fantasies of nineteenth-century scientific romanticism. He believes in ESP and psychokinesis, maintains at least a benign neutrality toward flying saucers, and ends (if I have understood his last paragraphs correctly) by embracing some ill-defined variety of God. Most of these notions have appeared in earlier Koestler creations, but *Janus* is his *Summa Theologica*. However, it does not convince.

Koestler's problem is that for him, unlike St. Augustine, faith is not enough. He wants his absurdities justified by scientific works—a God literally from the machine. In pursuit of this devoutly wished-for consummation, he cites the wilder conjectures of selected scientists, misrepresents the findings and theories of others, and generally name-drops like a convention of Hollywood agents. He never achieves an understanding of what scientific evidence is and of how to draw valid conclusions from it.

Koestler's rationale for pursuing miracles is worth examining in some detail, both because it typifies his research methods and because it probably tells us something about why irrationalism and anti-intellectualism have suddenly become popular and profitable. In summary, Koestler has given up on humanity. *Homo sapiens* is "an evolutionary misfit, afflicted by an endemic disorder": paranoia. The proof of this follows five lines of argument.

First comes the "ubiquity" of human sacrifice, the leading case being that of Abraham and Isaac. In fact, this story dramatized Jehovah's (and the Jews') *rejection* of human sacrifice. The institution has of course been extinct in the civilized West since the fall of Carthage and in the civilized Far East for at least as long; I doubt if it was at any period "ubiquitous." Nor where it existed was it credible evidence of paranoia, of the need to "placate and flatter gods conceived in nightmare dreams." More often than not, it was an attempt to manipulate the powerful, mysterious, and often inimical natural and social forces personified by the gods—forces that could engender not "nightmares" but such real catastrophes as plague, famine, and war.

Koestler's second argument, that our species is "virtually unique in the animal kingdom" in its "lack of instinctive safeguards against the killing of conspecifics," is simply false. The more we learn about the behavior of other animals in the wild, the more it becomes apparent that murder is by no means a uniquely human recreation.

Passing over his third argument—the alleged gap between intellectual and emotional functioning, which is so abstractly stated as to be unverifiable—we arrive at the fourth: the "striking disparity between the growth curves of science and technology on the one hand and of ethical conduct on the other," with "no discernible growth curve" in ethics between the sixth century B.C. and the present. His proof? The sixth century saw "the rise of Taoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism," the twentieth begat Hitlerism, Stalinism, and Maoism. It is of course an old rhetorical trick to compare the best, or presumed best, of one era or society with the worst, or presumed worst, of another—a maneuver often employed, for example, by apologists for Soviet "socialism" or American "free enterprise." But of course such rhetorical hanky-panky proves nothing except, perhaps, the naiveté or disingenuousness of the rhetorician.

To accept Koestler's fourth argument, moreover, is to reject his first, or vice versa. If, that is, human sacrifice was once universal, as he assures us, yet is now extinct or nearly so, *some* moral advance has surely occurred!

Koestler's fifth proof of human paranoia is the alleged leading role in history of murderous religious fanaticism — "homicide for *un*selfish reasons." As examples, he cites the "fervent" crusaders, who sacked Christian Constantinople as cheerfully as they had earlier plundered Moslem Palestine; the equally fervent Moslems, whose "holy" wars won them the lands of the Near East, North Africa, and most of Spain; and "the massacres, in the name of true religion, of the Thirty Years War"—which began with Protestant Saxony fighting for the Catholic "true religion" and ended with Catholic France backing the Protestants. Robbery with violence, whether individual or national, may be evidence of moral insensitivity but hardly of insanity.

Koestler's other arguments are on a level with those just surveyed. Indeed, I found not one area where I possess even modest expertise in which he does not misstate the facts—often grossly. He considers the circulatory system "controlled by the heart"; the respiratory system, by the lungs. No such control exists: Both are controlled by the nervous system. He contends that man's biological evolution "came to a virtual standstill in Cro-Magnon days, 50,000 to 100,000 years ago," which misstates both the probable course of human evolution and the dates of the Cro-Magnons (post-40,000 years ago). He alleges that the Cro-Magnons made "hardly any use" of their modern-type brain but rather manufactured "spears, bows and arrows of the same primitive type" for "millennium after millennium." In fact, the outstanding feature of the Cro-Magnons, the first anatomically modern human beings, was their propensity to innovate at what was for their time a breakneck pace. They invented hosts of new tools (one was the bow and arrow), more efficient hunting techniques, warmer garments, and a whole new region of human consciousness and technology: art. In some 30,000 years they produced more innovations than their ancestors had in three million.

People who have given up on humanity are almost compelled to believe in fairies—or miracles, or gurus, or God. But St. Augustine was right: If you want to believe, *believe*; don't muddy the waters of faith by dumping in the earthy, gritty facts of science. Otherwise you end up where Koestler does: with atrociously bad science and unconvincing theology. ◉

Robert Claiborne has been writing on science and other subjects for the past 20 years. His books include Climate, Man and History *and* God or Beast: Evolution and Human Nature.

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Books in Brief

Time in Its Flight

by Susan Fromberg Schaeffer
Doubleday, 782 pp., $12.95

Susan Fromberg Schaeffer, the versatile and exuberant author of *Anya*, has written a new novel formidable in ambition and scope, as well as length. *Time in Its Flight* is built around the marriage of Edna, a spirited Boston teen-ager of quite original attitudes, and the morose but passionate John Steele, a dedicated Vermont country doctor.

Set in the latter half of the past century, the book is a chronicle of the burgeoning Steele family in its passages through joy and adversity, births, illnesses, and death, with accompanying probes into the meaning of time, change, mortality, and other imponderables. When these large themes are embodied in action or event, the results are admirable, but they are too often pursued in an expository, didactic manner.

Schaeffer has a teeming imagination, and scatters ideas, anecdotes, and descriptions with a prodigal hand (the portrayal of nineteenth-century New England rural life is in fact educational, offering meticulous details about domestic customs, farm lore, fads, superstitions, tidbits from magazines and newspapers); unfortunately, only a portion of these contribute to any formal design or movement. Similarly, Schaeffer's attempt to render a photographic reality of affectionate family life (children underfoot, pancakes sizzling) yields tedium. When Schaeffer is not patronizing her characters or reminding the reader how lovable they are in all their quirkiness, her writing can be taut and vigorous: the episode in which the Steeles' youngest daughter, a religious extremist, goes mad after the loss of her husband and children in a diphtheria epidemic, or the sharp, witty passages showing Edna's early, bitter conflicts with her fashion plate mother. These are small gems in a framework too lax and comprehensive to sustain excitement.

—LYNNE SHARON SCHWARTZ

Undesirable Alien

by Régis Debray
Translated by Rosemarie Sheed
Viking, 256 pp., $9.95

The House of Fiction is a delicate structure, never more vulnerable than when weighed down with politics. The edifice totters in this first novel by Régis Debray, the young French theorist whose *Revolution in the Revolution?* became a Guevaraist handbook for Latin-American guerrillas in the late 1960s, when Debray was imprisoned for a time in Bolivia following Che's death.

Here is the stuff of an absorbing political tale; yet far more than I wished, the fate of Debray's Frank, a Swiss guerrilla operating in an unnamed Caribbean oil republic, is set in motion not by character but by a major dictum of the handbook: "The penalty of a false theory is military defeat."

Like Hemingway's Robert Jordan, Frank joins a struggle on foreign soil, encounters revolutionary types, falls in love, battles bravely, and dies somehow victorious in a lost cause. Separating these two heroes, however, is a chasm of history. "The age of absolutes no longer exists," Frank decides. Splintered by his roles as political mentor, guerrilla tactician, and lover—pulled every which way by the conflicting ideologies of the movement and the Communist party, by urban and mobile strategies, by violence and political collaboration, by personal desires and sacrifice—Frank is immobilized by dubious actions and ambiguous hopes. In the hands of a novelist surer of his craft and his narrative direction, such modern political complexities could have a Conradian drive and resonance.

Undesirable Alien falls short as a gripping imaginative experience, but it is a telling exploration of revolutionary motives. To anyone who has ever asked why some men and women choose a quality of death to make life more bearable for others in the unforeseeable future, *Undesirable Alien* is a revealing document.

—ROBERT MAURER

A Considerable Town

by M. F. K. Fisher
Knopf, 224 pp., $8.95

How much one likes M. F. K. Fisher's book about Marseilles will depend on one's appetite for ambience. *A Considerable Town* is not a history or a guidebook but an evocation of the port city—long on impressions and short on facts.

Fisher has lived in or visited Marseilles over a period of almost 50 years, inhaling the city's characteristic odors and happily eating the provender it scoops from the Mediterranean. (The best chapter, "The Food of Artemis," deals with the sensuous and pungent food of the region.) Yet Fisher begins by describing the city as *insolite*—mysterious and indefinable—and the mystery is not dispelled by these accumulated anecdotes.

The vignettes she sets down have a tone that is more *New Yorker* than Marseillais. In the way of that journal, many of the stories—Christmas in a hotel room, an encounter with an angry taxi driver, a walk with some nervous visitors—end on a note that is mildly benign or mildly quizzical or mildly despairing—anyway, *mild*. This process of stringing together a series of tiny epiphanies makes me more than mildly impatient; reading them is rather like trying to make a meal out of cocktail snacks.

—RHODA KOENIG

Shrinking

by Alan Lelchuk
Little, Brown, 564 pp., $11.95

By the age of thirty-eight, a failed marriage, several breakdowns, and two poorly received novels have reduced Lionel Solomon's struggle with destiny to mere survival and have supplanted a paradigm of brilliance with a captious hypocrite. He paces before his students "like a caged animal," and to his colleagues at the university, he has become "a caste figure walking amidst the Brahmins."

Enter young and voluptuous Tippy Matthews, an adoring fan whose sycophancy ignites Solomon's smoldering existence. Tippy masters Solomon's vincibility, and it is not long before he lies naked to both her physical and her spiritual presence in an affair perpetuated by sexual dementia. But Solomon is soon slapped back to reality upon realizing that Tippy's grand design is his total evisceration.

Shrinking is a discordant étude of one man's madness orchestrated by greed and desire. Written in the form of a spiritual purge, the book is a self-analytic discourse on the endurance of man, the capitulation of society, middle age, the death of literature and the subsequent starvation of the serious novelist, and the plight of the American Indian—all of these misguided by and commingled with 57 varieties of paranoia. It is a confusing, often brilliant work that is too grandiose in scope to command the force or the focus necessary to substantiate any one of its many subplots. It is as if Lelchuk diagnoses his own literary perplexity when, halfway through the book, Lionel asks a student to comment on a piece of prose. "A frightening juxtaposition of feelings," she says. "It's unbelievable all together like that."

—ROBERT STEPHEN SPITZ

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FINE PRINT

Quantum's Short but Significant Books

by Doris Grumbach

I KNOW there is said to be virtue in long books of fiction. François Mauriac has pointed out that one characteristic of a good novel is that the reader has the satisfying feeling that he has lived in it for some time. *War and Peace, The Forsyte Saga, Gone with the Wind, Remembrance of Things Past*, these are novels that envelop the reader like a warm bath, providing escape from the real world and immersion into a new, controlled, and orderly fictional reality.

But the sight of a fat book is forbidding. I have on my desk the bound advance proof of a 786-page novel—the width of two bricks. For all I know, it may be the new *Look Homeward Angel* (another long one), but it *appears* so formidable that I hesitate to take it on.

Contemporary nonfiction is also often in this overbloated state. Biographies especially have become heavier and more detailed. I think with dismay of Mark Schorer's *Sinclair Lewis* (768 pages) and Joseph Blotner's two-volume, 2,115-page *Faulkner: A Biography*. In both biographies the subject is buried under monstrous mountains of facts that detail the inexorable procedures of each day. We are constantly presented with monumental tomes that we back away from reading.

This is a circumlocutory way of approaching the University of California Press's Quantum Books series, which clearly defies the notion that the end justifies heavy means. The Press derived the name for these books from "quantum," the unit of emitted energy. Each book in the series is "a short study distinctive for the author's ability to offer a richness of detail and insight within about one hundred pages of print. Short enough to be read in an evening and significant enough to be a book."

The virtue of this series is that first-rate thinkers and writers—using words that are on the whole within the grasp of the layman—have condensed their original ideas into books short enough for the general reader to approach without trepidation.

This spring I have read three Quantum books: Jeffrey Mehlman's *Revolution and Repetition: Marx/Hugo/Balzac* ($8.50 cloth, $2.45 paper), Leo Bersani's *Baudelaire and Freud* ($8.50 cloth, $2.65 paper), and Robert M. Adams's *Bad Mouth: Fugitive Papers on the Dark Side* ($7.95 cloth, $2.65 paper). The first two are more challenging than the third is. Mehlman is close to being difficult because he utilizes Marx's advocacy of civil war in France to elucidate literary works by Hugo and Balzac; Bersani, because he uses what he calls "a non-reductive psychoanalytic [Freudian] theory" for an original reading of Baudelaire. Bersani overreaches the admirably set boundary of "about" 100 pages; his book is short for a literary study, only 151 pages, but it is tightly reasoned and highly allusive—and difficult.

But Adams's book is pure delight for the general reader. It makes him think about a subject he has never considered before. *Bad Mouth* covers the whole fascinating area of our usage of hostile and obscene language—in sports, teasing, thieves' jargon, carnies' talk, show business palaver, the crude exclamations we emit when we whack our thumb with a hammer. Adams has studied the "dark side" of language, as he terms it, from "the new arts of political lying and insult" to the "rags and garbage" language of Shakespeare, Swift, and Joyce.

Every page of this little book is filled with ideas written in a prose so lucid that it is a joy in itself. One example will serve as a taste of the whole 138 pages:

> The pace of modern life has quickened, of course, and the range of modern expression has broadened; simple slogan-insults, like "capitalist running dogs," "imperial lackeys," or "male chauvinist pigs," seem therefore particularly inappropriate, explicable only through an absolute lack of verbal imagination. Brighter, sharper, quicker as a retort to surliness and truculence are the metallic smile, the flashing thumb, and murmured phrase, "Up yours." C. S. Lewis once answered a polite and lucrative invitation to lecture in America with a surly negative hand-written on toilet paper; that is curmudgeonly behavior of the old school, which isolates the insulter in his private rage, instead of making him free of the civilized world.

With this bit of an introduction, you have before you a fine evening in which you can read, and *finish*, *Bad Mouth*. It could not have been better if Adams had used three times the words and space. Indeed, it will remind you of all the virtues suggested by Mark Twain's apology to a correspondent: "I would have written a shorter letter but I didn't have time."

The constant reader of new and experimental fiction and poetry will be aware of the contributions that New Directions Press (under the founding hand of the celebrated editor James Laughlin) has made to contemporary writing. Anyone who is not might like to sample ND's kind of publishing in its newest annual volume. Edited by Laughlin with two younger editors, Peter Glassgold and Frederick R. Martin, *New Directions 36* ($12.95 cloth, $3.95 paper) contains some selections from Delmore Schwartz's "The Verse Journals," those poetry biographies that summarize the influences on his life; Allen Ginsberg's touching tribute to his father upon his death, "Don't Grow Old," a poignant, gentle diatribe against death for reminding him that he too will die; an excellent essay by Octavio Paz on William Carlos Williams, "The Saxifrage Flower," translated from the Spanish by Donald D. Walsh; good stories written by Linsey Abrams and editor Glassgold. As with previous volumes, *New Directions 36* contains several selections from authors published by the press (Coleman Dowell is represented; she is the author of *Mrs. October Was Here*, a ND novel I much admired). This does not bother me one whit. Over the years ND has shown remarkable taste and a faith in writers that other presses would not take a chance on, besides having had the sense to keep their works in print long after their "shelf time" is over. ◉

Fraser Young
Literary Crypt No. 110

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. *Answer on page 49.*

Y R W E Q Q C A F R J W X M F J C U C C S , J C Y C K C A G N Y T E Y P - Q F N Y D H X Q R X - A U C B K C U .

— E Y E Q R B C G A E Y M C

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TRADE WINDS

Light Verse—Without Ogden Nash?

by William Cole

George M. Cohan said, "Always leave them laughing when you say goodbye," and since this is my last Trade Winds column, what better way to do so than to talk about Kingsley Amis's *The New Oxford Book of English Light Verse* (Oxford University Press, $13.95). W. H. Auden edited an earlier version of this collection, and it wasn't really very light—is "Danny Deever" light? This one isn't as light or quite as funny as I like my light verse, but the masters are here: Calverley, Gilbert, Hood, Carroll, J. K. Stephen, Owen Seaman, and Belloc are well represented. And despite the title, 10 Americans are included, among them Phyllis McGinley (without whom I can do), Peter De Vries (yes, he writes fine light verse), and Wallace Irwin, a little-known master Amis must have discovered in one of my anthologies. But why no Ogden Nash, our greatest contemporary light verse writer?

Let's get back to Wallace Irwin (1875–1959), with one of his ridiculous poems from *Nautical Lays of a Landsman*, titled "Reminiscence":

When many years we'd been apart
  I met Sad Jim ashore
And set to talkin' heart to heart
  About the days of yore.

"Do you recall them happy days?"
  "I don't," says Jim, "do you?"
I speaks up hearty and I says,
  "Be jiggered if I do!"

"Then why are you recallin' of
  The joyful days gone by,
The songs and girls we ust to love?"
  "What songs and girls?" says I.

"I guess I have fergot," says Jim
  And started N N E.
It seems I had the best o' him
  And him the best o' me.

And why not a bit of lagniappe for the road, with Gavin Ewart's "Miss Twye," which by now must have appeared in a hundred anthologies:

Miss Twye was soaping her breasts in the bath
When she heard behind her a meaning laugh
And to her amazement she discovered
A wicked man in the bathroom cupboard.

All Wrong Most of the Time

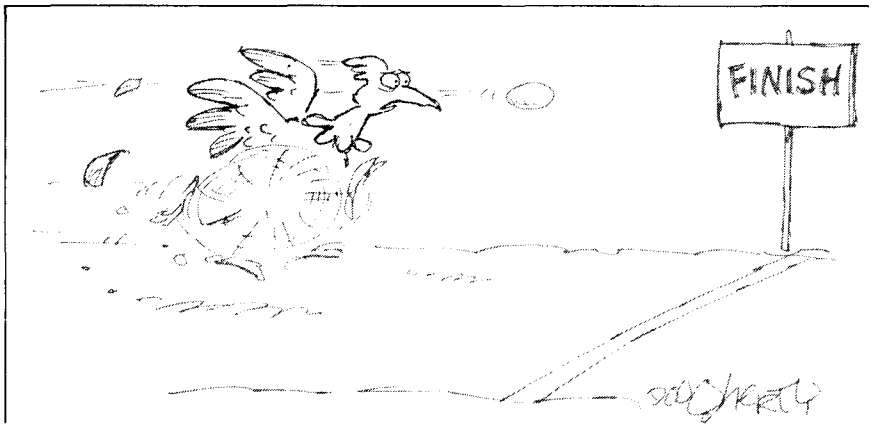
There is a tastefully executed needlepoint message over the office door of one of our most prominent publishers: "The relationship of the agent to the publisher is the same as that of the knife to the throat." No indication of this attitude appears in agent Donald MacCampbell's *The Writing Business* (Crown, $6.95), a short, hard-hitting book about agenting and writing. "Business" is the key word for MacCampbell, who queries the term "literary agent" since most agents, himself included, are in the game to make money—they're salesmen. He has chapters titled "Be Sure You Have Something to Sell," "Be Your Own Press Agent," and "The Dangers of Collaboration." He tells how to prepare a manuscript, how to slant magazine article ideas, how to query editors, how to get an agent (I always say it's harder to get an agent than to get a publisher), how to read a contract. MacCampbell warns against vanity presses and agents who charge reading fees, and talks about the peculiarities of editors and of the market. He quotes Simon & Schuster editor Dan Green, who says admirably, "We're all wrong most of the time." But he's sometimes wrongheaded: "Never get involved with writers' groups." Nonsense, I belong to four, and they are all useful, as well as socially entertaining. Nonetheless, MacCampbell has an idea I rather like:

For the writer who has trouble with English, Fowler's *A Dictionary of Modern American Usage* will teach you the difference between *will* and *shall* and similar subtleties. I wish hotels, instead of sticking a Bible in every room, would switch to the Fowler book—which should be studied by everyone who attempts to use correct English and should be stuffed down the throats of all radio and TV announcers.

A useful book, but not as thorough as the recent *How to Get Happily Published* (why do I so dislike that title?), by Judith Appelbaum and Nancy Evans (Harper & Row, $9.95).

Idiocies

Growing up is a kind of gullible's travels, and we pick up all sorts of untrue beliefs along the way. By the time we're sixteen, our brains are cluttered with misinformation about such idiocies as the *I Ching*, astrology, firewalking, the Indian rope trick, the pope's infallibility, Scientology, lemming suicide, and the Tarot. To clear a kid's mind, give him a copy of Philip Ward's *A Dictionary of Common Fallacies*, an English-originated book just published at $16.50 by a firm I've never heard of, The Oleander Press (210 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10010). Three hundred packed pages take up the fallacies in alphabetical order, from A ("Eve gave Adam an *Apple* in the Garden of Eden") to Z ("*Zoological* Fallacies"). Elephants, Ward says, aren't afraid of mice. Mumps do not cause sterility in men. There are no ghosts. Boomerangs were never intended to return to the thrower. Parrots never live to be a hundred. Powdered glass isn't poisonous. Shaving won't make hair come in thicker. Phrenology is bunk. As is Von Däniken and Lourdes and the yeti. And Atlantis. An opinionated man, Philip Ward, and he performs a valuable service, as have Jeremy Bentham, Voltaire, Bergen Evans, and Martin Gardner before him. ◉



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A TOUCH OF SICILIAN CLASS

by William F. Buckley, Jr.

I CAN NAME my favorite restaurant as glibly as I can name my favorite wife, country, religion, and journal of opinion. It is (I should like to say "of course," but Paone's is not widely known) Nicola Paone, its address is 207 East Thirty-fourth Street, New York City, and I suppose I have eaten there a hundred times in the last 10 years, which would certainly account for my being Paone's favorite customer, but, believe me, in this courtship, I was the suitor.

Mr. Paone, though entirely gregarious, is a somewhat mysterious figure. One gets to know right away that though born in New York, he was raised in Sicily, that by training he is a singer, a self-accompanying (guitar) balladeer, who every now and again disappears to make a tour of Latin America. His restaurant brings you the unobtrusive sounds of Mr. Paone plucking his guitar, in random, improvisatory melodies—just the right kind of music for background—but one does not hear his singing voice, ever, and that is one of the little mysteries in this two-room restaurant that seats about 40 people, and is devoted to the pursuit of extramusical perfection.

Another thing one learns quickly about Mr. Paone is that although hospitality is, along with perfectly prepared food, the other cardinal virtue, it is a hospitality that requires an unaffected reciprocity. Specifically, men must wear coats and ties. Those tieless pilgrims who wander in are given most discreetly the alternative of wearing one of Mr. Paone's own ties or of being ushered, gently but firmly, to the door. I had a wonderful experience having arranged to meet there for lunch the fabled science-fiction writer Theodore Sturgeon, in from the West Coast, whom I had never before met. I was a minute or two late and was accosted outside Paone's by a man dressed up as Mephistopheles—everything save a red-velvet tail. It was Sturgeon. He had entered Paone's and in no time at all was redirected to the sidewalk. He was quite miffed about it, as we headed off toward some fish restaurant, explaining that he took great pride in his resplendent costumes because they were especially designed and cut for him by his talented wife, who aspired among other things to be a dress designer. Mephistopheles and I got on to other subjects, but Mrs. Sturgeon cost him lunch at Paone's.

And then too, for over 10 years Mr. Paone would not permit women wearing slacks. My other embarrassment came on making an engagement there with Barbara Long, the writer whom everyone knew except me, and who suffered from infantile paralysis in her youth. Her crutches were not discernible in the sudden dark of the anteroom just off the midday sun, so that Mr. Paone's assistant, Franco, politely advised her that she could not enter wearing slacks. Mr. Paone, for all that I cite his hospitality, does not keep extra women's skirts about; so she trudged up the stairwell, to the street, into my embarrassed arms. After that episode, Mr. Paone changed the rules. But the kind of behavior that is sometimes associated with sloppy dress somehow never happens at Paone's. The pressures being implicit. It would hurt Mr. Paone's feelings, which one wouldn't want to do, and if one did, one has the feeling that all the Sicilian blood would suddenly rise to his temples, and he would dispatch you most neatly (he likes to tell you that, literally, one could eat off the floors of his kitchen). The thing of it is, about Paone's, is that its owner desires a perfect experience for his guests, from the moment they enter until the moment they are (escorted) out. He will carry his share of the burden—the service, and the food. Necessarily, the guests must carry their share (no rowdiness). To interrupt the decorum is worse merely than to create noise or distraction; it is to rent the veil of the temple. An act of profanation, the awful equal of, say, an overcooked fillet of fish. I have never seen it happen and cannot imagine its happening. And yet the atmosphere is in no sense repressive. It isn't like when you were a little boy sitting at the captain's table on the *Normandie*. It is a part of that total sense of security you feel on ordering the brook trout and knowing it will be—perfect.

At Paone's, service is given the same priority as food, and if what you want is a glass of wine or a Bloody Mary or a (ugh) Coca Cola, it will be there before your eyes have become accustomed to the dim light, the rather routine decor, the 15 tables with ample passageway between them (a few years ago, Mr. Paone enlarged the restaurant without adding a single seat). And, eventually—at uncannily the right moment—you are brought a large wooden board on which is written the menu. Not only is it in Italian, it is in some cases in ad hoc Italian, since Mr. Paone is given to naming the dishes he invents (half of what he serves he has, so to speak, composed). What I find myself saying to my guests is: "Everything here is superb. Pasta, veal, chicken, beef, fish." A few years ago, dining there, I left behind some lecture notes, the disappearance of which I discovered disconsolately on returning home at midnight. I was leaving on an eight o'clock flight and thought perhaps I'd be lucky enough to find the janitor at Paone's at six in the morning to let me retrieve my notes. Who let me in was Mr. Paone (who lives in Scarsdale). Already he had been to the markets to buy the fish, and the meat. I think he would be physically ill if made to eat a fish that hadn't been swimming 24 hours earlier.

But I always make Mr. Paone, or Franco, perform because their descriptions—always the same—are inimitable, and I have secretly transcribed one or two of them. There has never been such zucchini as Paone will serve as an appetizer, and I ask him to describe it... "We boil them"—he speaks with the pronounced enunciations of an actor, and he manages to bring an almost libidinous excitement as he proceeds with his description: "—al dente, firm, a few drops of oil, a sprinkle of parmigiano cheese ... pepper, if you wish, and... pronto, ready to enjoy them." It does sound silly, but I am always transfixed. The only thing I know how to cook is fudge, which I learned to do as a boy, but for the life of me, I cannot transpose my recipe into Paonese.

I fancy there his fish Malandrino and ask for an explanation: "Fish Malandrino is a simple and light dish. We debone a fillet of sole, prepare little [note the missing indefinite article which is a part of the flavor] rice with a subtle flavor of onion, put it in between the two pieces of sole, sandwiched sort of, and then bake with a touch of dry white wine, few drops of oil... and serve it with its own gravy."

The fettucine is of course made in the house; and prepared in the kitchen. It is hardly possible, Mr. Paone explodes

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to get proper help to carry dishes. "Imagine if we also gave them the responsibility for cooking the fettucine!" It is incomparable, but if you are malleable, Mr. Paone will persuade you instead to order *Serenata*, "one of our modest creations." It—or, rather, "they"—is noodles "mixed with cream and cheese: ricotta in the center covered with more noodles ... cream on top... first baked... then under the broiler until it acquires that blondish color... ground black pepper is magnifico with it."

Since as a child I swore I would never willingly eat livers again, I must mention the *Primavera*. "We prepare chicken livers in an unusual way. Then sliced prosciutto, the livers placed in the center, wrap the prosciutto around it, baked ... and served with a special white wine sauce."

The wines are, by the way, available for inspection in the second of the two rooms, the wine room in the rear just before the kitchen. The supply is inexhaustible, and I have made few efforts to remember their names leaving it to Mr. Paone or to Franco to suggest a wine according to the mood. The house white wine is a California Chablis, of unknown and undiscoverable label—a house secret. The wine glasses hold exactly one quarter of a wine bottle, and are filled to the brim, never mind French protocol. I end my meals at Paone's with espresso and a cigar, and for this I am widely pitied, because the restaurant is famous for its homemade (all by Mr. Paone himself) desserts.

At Paone's, if you are told on a particular day that you must have the broccoli, or the asparagus, or the melon—order it, unless you have a mortal allergy. If I were commanded to order a simple meal for someone at Paone's for a single experience, I think I'd put in for the zucchini to begin, followed by the pompano and a small side order of fettucine. But nobody, I think, has only one meal at Paone's.

Yes, as I feared, someone would ask about the price. It is expensive. Even so, I would judge from midtown experiences that there is a rebate on the order of 20 percent for the indignity of having to travel all the way down to Thirty-fourth Street. Console yourself that if Paone's were located in the East Fifties, it would be even more expensive, but the food and service wouldn't be any better, because that isn't possible. ◉

William F. Buckley, Jr., the editor of the National Review, *is the author of a new novel,* Stained Glass.

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BOOKED FOR TRAVEL

Heaven the Whole Day Long

by Horace Sutton

IT WAS HIGH NOON in the low country of South Carolina the other Saturday and time for lunch. At least that was what was on the mind of a huge white heron that had landed among the black reeds at Captain Sam's marsh a few moments before, its wings spread in an awesome span that would not have disgraced a condor. Now the wings were tucked away while the bird picked its way in that measured walk that is affected by stalkers and Lippizaner horses. It was step, pause, step, the long hinged beak working like chopsticks, dipping into the soup of the marsh water to retrieve a morsel of wriggling sashimi.

Old gnarled trees, bereft of life, stood about in artful poses as if they had been placed there with infinite care by high-priced decorators. Far out beyond the reeds, the Atlantic, a solid expanse of delft, was dashing itself like crockery thrown against a reef.

All this was afoot at Seabrook Island, a 2,000-acre expanse that is part of the line of barrier islands that are strung like outguards along the banks of Georgia and the Carolinas. Seabrook likes to say that it is a commercial development that is sensitive to the fragility of nature. Only the afternoon before, I walked across the hard-packed, gray-brown sand to spend an hour watching porpoises playing a scant 20 yards offshore, not just diving and bobbing in rhythm, so familiar a sight especially at sea, but dipping at some unseen underwater game that left them tails in the air, flapping in the waning sunlight.

Echelons of brown pelicans, meanwhile, were winging in on long, strung-out single-file flights, heading home to the offshore sanctuary on Deveaux Bank, a sandbar clearly visible from the decks of the vacation homes that have gone up there. If it hadn't been for the winter freeze that put a crimp in the shrimping industry, there would be by cocktail hour, a resident assured me, a procession of shrimp boats heading across the flats of the North Edisto River, where it empties into the Atlantic, followed inevitably by pelicans to whom the fragrance of a hold filled with shrimp is no less compelling than a whiff of Lagerfeld's Chloé might be to an overheated swain.

Seabrook is one of 11 barrier islands that have become popular as retirement refuges or as second homes or as rentable villas ever since Charles Fraser turned the scrubby pine-sprinkled island of Hilton Head, South Carolina, into a multifaceted vacationland with private developments, golf courses, tennis courts, and some large hotels and shopping centers. There were many branches of Hilton Head, several under Fraser's aegis, which, alas, fared badly; and there have been a number of mutations, among them Moss Creek Plantation; Kiawah, which is financed by the Kuwaitis, much to the amazement of almost everyone; Seabrook, underwritten by a banking affiliate of Brown Brothers Harriman & Co.; and St. Simons Island, where Jimmy Carter goes when he is in need of a retreat on what constitutes friendly territory.

In the case of Seabrook, it is a carefully planted collection of homes in a variety of styles—Spinnaker beach-houses, with steeply pitched roofs cut out to accommodate second-story decks; treeloft villas similar to those installed at Disneyworld; contemporary versions of low-country cottages; and a hundred-unit condominium village called High Hammock Villas. Any unit can be placed in the rental pool and leased to visitors who come on a transient basis, occupying the home as they would a hotel room. A suite that sleeps four, if you count two on the convertible living room sofa, costs $45 a day, a fair price considering the cost of hotels nowadays and a modest one if the family uses the kitchen and doesn't make too many forays to the new swim-and-racquet club where the prices for meals are expensive.

There are 150 rental units in place now, aggrandizing in price every day, but that number will quintuple in five years, when the Seabrook will function, as other barrier island refuges already do, as a full-fledged resort. It has already hired Richard Erb, former manager of Rockefeller's princely Mauna Kea, in Hawaii, and later manager of Rockresort's Caneel Bay operation, which has catered to assorted potentates from Hubert Humphrey, after the defeat, to the Aga Khan, after his marriage. Erb's relationship with Laurance Rockefeller at Mauna Kea and at St. John's in the Virgin Islands, as well as two years at Colonial Williamsburg, has honed his environmental sensibilities to a fine point, and that experience fits well with Seabrook, where the roads veer to avoid live oaks and some trees are left as islands.

Inevitably, Seabrook is compared to, or lumped together with, Kiawah Island, which sits just above it. Considering the narrow creeks that separate properties in these lowlands, both projects are considered a part of John's Island, a reedy stretch of low country that is south and west of Charleston, 2 miles away.

Kiawah, having been at it longer, is in a higher state of resort development with a shopping center of its own and large public dining facilities. There was considerable conversation and some consternation when the Kuwaiti sought successfully to sink their oil money in this piece of mid-South real estate. There is no outward indication that Kiawah has restricted its clientele by outwardly refusing to take Jewish guests. More likely it has worked the other way, with Jewish visitors puttin their vacation money elsewhere.

JOHN'S ISLAND was a land grant made to the first governor of South Carolina in the early years of the eighteenth century. William Seabrook whose name is now emblazoned on the new island resort, was a planter successfully growing Sea Island cotton The barrier islands are the heart of the Gullah country, a word said to be a corruption of Angola, whence many slaves came. The Gullah Negroes would hardly have achieved their notoriety had it not been for DuBose Heyward, who worked on the docks in Charleston and wrote his novel *Porgy* in 1925. *Porgy* was set in a black tenement area then called Cabbage Row—was Heyward who made it Catfish Row—but it is unlikely it would have achieved worldwide fame had the Gershwin brothers not taken an interest in it.

Much of the collaboration went on by mail, and there were occasional meetings in New York. But the Heywards had a summer cottage at Folly Island which is a barrier island on the north side of Kiawah. They invited the Gershwins down to continue the collaboration. In the summer of 1934, with Ira left in the North to finish up the last work, *Life Begins at 8:40*, George Gershwin and his cousin Henry Both

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Deveaux Bank—"Echelons of brown pelicans winging in on long single-file flights."

took the train and encamped in a Spartan cottage on Folly Island. They were on the beach in the same manner (though not as comfortable) as those who all these decades later have taken up residence on the hard-packed sands at the Atlantic's edge. The composers ventured inland to James Island and looked in at a "shouting," a sort of song and dance manifestation performed in church to body movements and the shaking of tambourines. George took some of the six-voice prayer he later heard at a church service and adapted it to the opera. He and his cousin headed north in August.

Porgy was first produced in 1935 and has been performed all over the world ever since, sometimes—as in one memorable performance in Switzerland—in blackface, in German. Gullah talk was well adapted by Ira Gershwin and DuBose Heyward as witness this bit of philosophy from Porgy's act two rendition of "I've Got Plenty of Nuttin'":

De folks wid plenty o' plenty,
got to pray all de day.
Seems wid plenty you sure got to worry
how to keep de debbel away, away.

Now, I ain't a-frettin' 'bout hell
'til de time arrive.
Never worry long as I'm well,
never one to strive to be good, to be bad,
what de hell, I is glad I's alive.*

Gullah talk, if it indeed can be found at all, is centered about the barrier islands, very little of it being heard now in Charleston. (Catfish Row, in Charleston, is a narrow alley flanked by a gift shop named Porgy, which faces a women's shop called, of course, Bess.)

I spent a chill April afternoon in the okra patch in back of his house, talking to Elijah Heyward, who is seventy-eight and so would have been in his forties when DuBose Heyward and the Gershwins put together *Porgy and Bess*, reaching for that dialect that runs along the coast from Georgetown, South Carolina, to the edges of Florida. Dr. Julian K. Quattlebaum, Sr., of Savannah, writes a foreword to *My Friend the Gullah*, a book of Amos and Andy jokes as collected by J. Gary Black, who learned the dialect while a tax man on the coastal regions. Quattlebaum calls Gullah a linguistic link between America, the Antilles, and Africa, although he might have tossed in Britain, for there is a base of peasant English derived from the political prisoners shipped from Great Britain and Ireland following the rebellions of Cromwell and the Stuarts.

The whites became the overseers of a mélange of blacks gathered from the barracoons of Africa, some of them kidnapped, some prisoners of war, some sold to slavers as tribal punishment, and some just swapped for trinkets by their own families. Most of them spoke a variant of Bantu, but there were hundreds of dialects, and conversation among them was limited. Moreover, ships' captains preferred to mix the cargo to avoid concerted action by a rebellious group that could communicate among themselves.

As slaves in the market, the blacks were taught enough peasant English to obey orders. What emerged was a sort of baby talk unstructured by grammar or syntax and unfettered by words that were difficult for the African tongue to pronounce.

Elijah and I talked about planting okra, how he puts the "men-yu" down first to fertilize the ground and how he "whups" the new plant to make it grow. "Las' Sunday gone" he preached the sermon at the Promised Land, A.M.E. church (the initials stand for African Methodist Episcopal, which in the words of Elijah is "a form of 'Pistable."), choosing the story of Lazarus. He is unable to read."God reads for me," he says.

A fisherman akin to those worthies who lived along Catfish Row is Ed Johnson, who has one tooth and in his words "is doin' his sebenty-seben year." He doesn't go out to the creek much anymore but spends most of his time weaving nets. He was busily sending his wooden needle through what he called "fi' 'sread nylon." What kind of fish would he catch with this throw net? Well, "all the fish you wanna ketchum," he said, "mullet, trout, bass, stingaree ...'cos you don' wan' take no shark..."

The Gullah accents are difficult on the unaccustomed ear, but *Charleston Receipts*, a popular best seller as local cookbooks go—it is now in its twenty-first printing and has sold 415,000 copies—reprints some snatches of Gullah talk. "Ef yoh teck a heapa haa'd likker, yoh gwine tink deep en' talk strong." Or, "...w'en de preachuh eat to do ooman house, him fuh nyam de bes'! Nuttin' but de bes fuh suit."

Crab and especially she-crab soup are the low-country specialties, and so are shrimp stew and okra pilau, also called Limping Susan. Seabrook's Beach Club has an informal coffee shop and a formal restaurant with a predictable menu, but the resort will soon move to build a dining room of first order. At Kiawah, next door, one can eat at the local edition of the Ice House—there is one in downtown Charleston too, with a genuine icebox door as its front portal—or in the handsome public dining room, where waitresses are done up plantation style.

Rast's, on Highway 90, also called Bohicket Road, spreads huge picnic tables under the live oak trees and thinks nothing of serving 1,000 citizens for a sit-down dinner. Barbecue is its specialty, which it prepares on a patented device that has a high dome and pockets for charcoal on the sides. The meat never needs turning. Rast's also dishes up six kinds of pie, peach and strawberry shortcake; and Ola English, its maitresse d'hôtel, makes what she affirms is a "wicked banana split." It comes to table as proudly as a Spanish galleon, with maraschinos flying. Only a Deveaux pelican—or a teen-ager—could dispatch it in a sitting. ◉

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Editorial: When American and Soviet Writers Meet

FOR THE BETTER PART of a week last month, American and Soviet writers sat at the same table and talked about the art of the novel and the place of the author in the world literary community.

The American writers were Edward Albee, Vera Dunham, Elizabeth Hardwick, Arthur Miller, Joyce Carol Oates, Harrison Salisbury, William Jay Smith, William Styron, John Updike, Kurt Vonnegut, and myself. Leo Gruliow was our rapporteur.

The Soviet writers included Nikolai Fedorenko, Gregori Baklanov, Nodar Dumbadze, Valentin Katayev, Alexander Kosorukov, Felix Kuznetsov, Freda Luria, Mikola Slutskis, Sergei Zalygin, Yasen Zasursky, and Isabella Zorina.

The meeting was the sequel to a similar conference in Moscow a year ago. The American writers who participated at that time kept raising the issue of Soviet dissident writers. For their part, the Soviet writers were equally emphatic about the disparity between the large number of books by American writers published in the Soviet Union and what they regarded as the minuscule publication of Soviet authors in the United States. The Soviet writers also expressed their bewilderment over the prevalence of pornography and violence in American culture.

In the aftermath of the 1977 conference, both sides felt that, without ignoring these differences, it might be useful if a second meeting could be held at which literary matters would be more fully and freely discussed.

This, then, is the background of the recent meeting at the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters in New York City. The conference was held under the joint auspices of the C. F. Kettering Foundation, as an extension of its Dartmouth Conference series, and the U.S. State Department. Nikolai Fedorenko and I served as co-chairmen.

Although both sides did not ignore any opportunities to voice their continuing concerns—the Americans, about the condition of the dissidents, and the Russians, about the imbalance of literary trade—the meeting succeeded in focusing attention on the novel in contemporary society. The preponderance of the talk at the Academy table was about the novelist's art, the problems of creativity in the modern world, the way fictional characters can come to life, the contribution literature can make to an understanding of human potentiality, and the difficulties of the publishing marketplace.

Was the conversation guarded, rigid, formalized? Not in the least. The Russian writers had no hesitation in drawing on their personal experiences and philosophies to illuminate their ideas as novelists. They spoke frankly about their perceptions of the weaknesses in their own work and, perhaps even more significantly, about the weaknesses that have developed in their society. For example, the first Russian writer to speak at the conference, Felix Kuznetsov, called attention to the problem of "too much materialism and too little spirituality" in Soviet life today. He said that the conquest of hunger and poverty in the Soviet Union has not produced a corresponding increase in spiritual and human values. Indeed, he added, the loss of spirituality comes close to being the main problem in Soviet society.

It occurred to me that before drawing any conclusions about new philosophic trends in the Soviet novel, it might be a good idea to find out just what Kuznetsov meant when he used the word *spirituality*. He said he had been referring to those higher qualities of life that are manifest but that elude precise definition. He felt that the term has a connection with ethical values as well. Essentially, he said, he was thinking of the uniqueness of human life. In any event, he added, the awareness that a human being is not just a biological accumulation is being increasingly reflected in the contemporary Soviet novel and is having the effect of strengthening the ties of the Soviet novelist to his classical Russian forebears. He said, in this connection, that contemporary Russian fiction is "struggling with the eternal problems of the human soul, the meaning of existence, and matters of conscience."

If we were struck with the frequent Soviet references to the importance of spirituality and human values, we were even more surprised to hear the Soviet writers say that it is no longer fashionable for contemporary Russian writers to be uncritical of their society or of those things that interfere with human individuality. As one of the Soviet writers put it, "The glorification of the state is no longer considered a primary function of the novelist." Accordingly, the present-day novel steers away from synthetic happy endings and standardized attitudes.

John Updike, who led off for the Americans, welcomed the Soviet references to the importance of human spirituality, saying he had always regarded the artist as the custodian of spiritual values. In Updike's view, spirituality is connected to truth and respect for truth. Truth is socially useful for the novelist, although anything that happens to a writer can be useful.

Updike found it difficult to separate literature from philosophy. He also thought that "heightened intellectual demand" will result in shorter works of fiction—the average length being perhaps 200 pages. He found himself attracted to the notion of the novel as a "comic-strip masterpiece." In general, too many writers are captive to convention. He indicated that a certain liberation is called for. "We are, all of us novelists, like neoclassic playwrights captive to the three unities, prisoners of conventions we cannot imagine our way around; a wonderful freedom awaits us." He had a hopeful vision of a short novel that would serve as the vehicle of a philosophic revolution through which a new Rousseau or Kirkegaard might speak.

Many of the Russian writers at the table nodded approvingly, or at least understandingly, when Updike spoke philosophically about the future of the novel, but their eyebrows went up and their jaws went down when he quoted the French as saying that the novel cannot exist without adultery. Readers, he said, tend to be quickly sated with tales involving fame or wealth, but they sit upright when the novelist burrows into the inner lives and desires of people.

In their comments, the Russians reflected the view that there is much more to life than love. Adultery is not muted or ignored in classical or contemporary Russian literature, they said, as witness Tolstoy and Dostoevsky and many of the writers at the table. But a preoccupation with adultery can be as exhausting and dispiriting in the novel as it is in real life, and readers are the first to know it.

The conversation turned to other preoccupations and obsessions

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William Styron said he had given some thought to the things he was trying to say in his novels, consciously or subconsciously. A novelist sometimes isn't even aware of his underlying theme or purpose. Yet, in his own case, he realized he has been possessed by a driving theme. "I have been dealing with people who are actually metaphors, and vice versa," he said. "But behind the metaphors is a central idea that runs through all my books. It is the domination of one person by another. Just recognizing this fact is helpful."

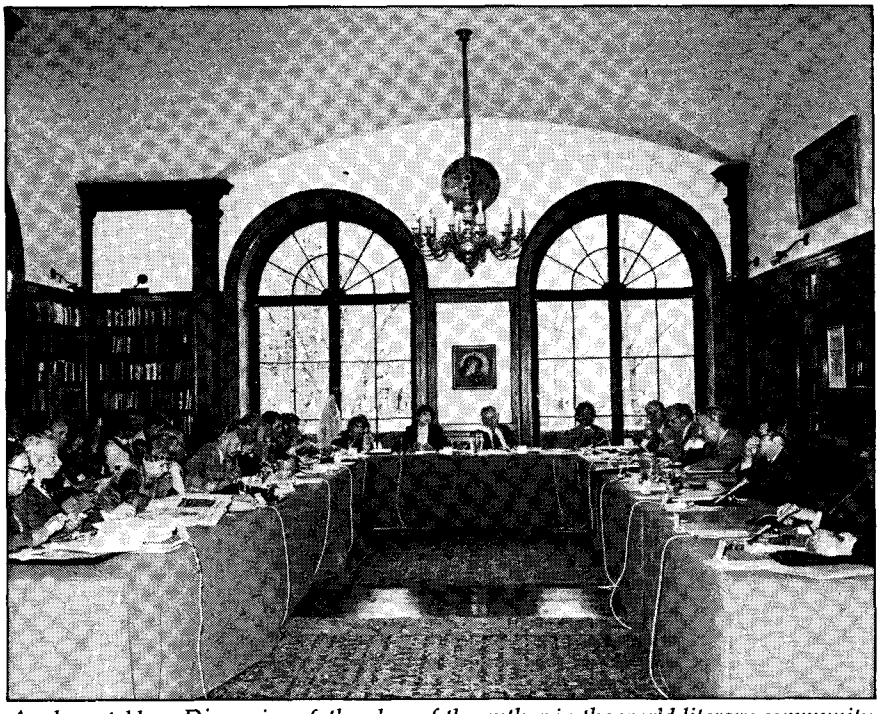
One of the surprising and significant features of the conference was the relative absence of debate, or even discussion, of such ideological influences on the novel as economic determinism or dialectical materialism. The only writer at the table, in fact, who kept stressing the economic and political forces that shaped the English and American novel was Joyce Carol Oates. She believes the novel is first of all political, then sometimes philosophical and sometimes psychological.

Joyce Carol Oates's comments produced a spirited rejoinder by one of the American writers at the table, Vera Dunham, professor of Slavic languages and literature. Especially did she disagree with the observation that social stability is not a precondition for the writing of a novel. Moreover, she did not accept the proletarian interpretation of the function of the novel that emerged from Oates's analysis.

NOT ALL THE arguments for freedom of expression were raised by the American writers. Nikolai Fedorenko, one of his country's leading scholars of Chinese culture and literature, spoke of his experiences in the early years following the establishment of the People's Republic of China. He described his sense of shock and revulsion at the massive burning of books by the Chinese revolutionaries. He enumerated the names of the great classical Russian writers, contemporary Soviet authors, and eminent Western literary figures whose works were put to the torch because they did not fit in with the new political theology.

I told Nikolai Fedorenko that the American writers were at one with him in his indignation over such wanton destruction. With him, we mourned the books that were consumed in the bonfires. And we hoped he would mourn with us those books that weren't even born because of invisible political burnings.

Samuel Vaughan, president of Doubleday & Company, was host at a dinner for the entire group the second day of the conference. In the open discussion following dinner, Nikolai Fedorenko asked Vaughan whether he had any advice to offer to Soviet writers whose work is of proven literary merit but who are being denied access to the American market.



Academy table— Discussion of the place of the author in the world literary community.

Vaughan said the question didn't apply only to Soviet writers. Authors throughout the world—Asia, Africa, South America, even Europe—all want to know why their books are not being published in the United States. There are finite limits, however, to the number of translations the American reading market is capable of absorbing. It is unreasonable to think that publishers can force books on reluctant buyers.

Fedorenko commented that he had seen an NBC television documentary about American book publishing practices, with Edwin Newman as commentator. The documentary revealed tricks and techniques in "manipulating" books into best sellers. Fedorenko said he was appalled by the statement in the documentary that hundreds of thousands of dollars change hands, with book publishers, paperback houses, syndicates, film and television producers all caught up in the swirl of transactions involving a manuscript that no one has fully read. The documentary, titled "Land of Hype and Glory," quoted key people in the book industry as saying, in effect, that books do not have to possess literary value; they can be "written to order" and moved along a best seller assembly belt.

I was glad that the subject came up, for American readers are not being well served by the super-hucksterism that has come into book publishing. But it was unfortunate, just the same, that Fedorenko didn't see the Newman documentary in context. He seemed to accept the impression created by the film that almost nothing worthwhile is being issued by American publishers. Yet all Fedorenko had to do was to look at the list of American books being read in the Soviet Union to recognize that American publishing, flawed though it is, produces more books than are translated from any other language.

In any case, it is incorrect to say that American publishers have no interest in Soviet fiction. The Macmillan Company, for example, has been especially conscientious in seeking out Soviet books that might be attractive to American readers. Just in the past year, Macmillan brought out seven books by Soviet writers. I tried to call attention to these facts.

The dinner ended amicably, but the following morning the same debate erupted all over again. Several Russian writers expressed their astonishment over the way the reading public in this country can be manipulated, as demonstrated in the NBC documentary. Nodar Dumbadze said he felt uneasy about being told to adapt to the marketplace. Why shouldn't the marketplace adapt to the writer?

Kurt Vonnegut replied that it was clear to him that some basic explanation was in order about the way the free

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"It is no longer accurate to divide Soviet writers into two categories—the out-and-out dissidents and the hard-line party members; there is a wide octave between the two."

literary marketplace operated. As a writer, he said, he is a tradesman in a certain sense; and he asked that the Soviet participants not think ill of him on that account. He didn't resent having to prove himself as a writer by being able to attract a lot of readers. Yes, it had been difficult for him, as it has been for many American writers, to get started. But if a writer believes in himself, he doesn't accept defeat just because publishers are not interested in publishing him. Vonnegut said that he had been his own publisher with his first work, having been inspired by the fact that this had been the way Hemingway got started. It is not a very exhilarating experience, he said, but at least a writer is not completely blocked on all sides.

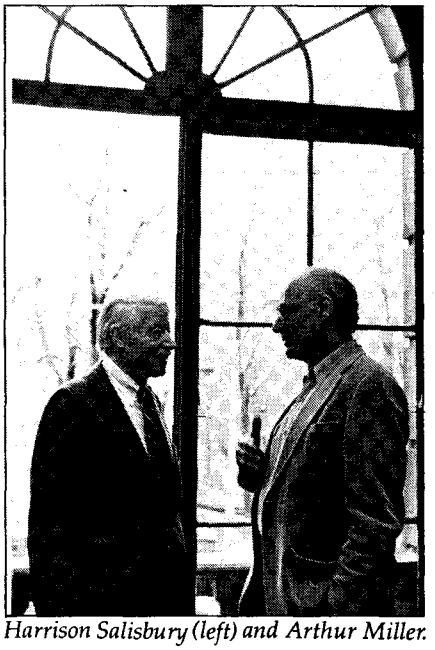
Yasen Zasursky said he was largely persuaded by Kurt Vonnegut's exposition, but he was bound to reflect, just the same, that for every Vonnegut or Hemingway who has the courage, persistence, and initiative to find his own way, there are numberless Mickey Spillanes who have an easy time saturating the marketplace with their potboilers.

HARRISON SALISBURY brought us back to the main purpose of our meeting by connecting the writer to historical developments. He thought it highly significant that once the people at the table got away from talk about publishing and talked about writing, they discovered they were on common ground. Indeed, he said, if he had no way of knowing the identity of the writers at the table, he would be unable to tell from the discussion of literary principles who were the Russians and who were the Americans. He was convinced that the common literary heritage is far stronger than most people realize. The great names in Russian and American literature are revered in both countries.

Like Salisbury, Valentin Katayev emphasized the full restoration of classical Russian writers in the estimation of Soviet readers and authors today. He reminded the group that Leo Tolstoy had been opposed to the Russian Revolution, seeing no purpose that would be served by the uprisings. Yet Tolstoy, like the great pre-Revolutionary or anti-Revolutionary writers, has an honored place today in Soviet society.

Tranquillity, said Katayev, does not become the writer. The writer should always be troubled about something—injustice, stupidity, cruelty, evil, avarice. If he is unconcerned and lethargic, he isn't a writer.

A lot of nonsense, Katayev continued, is said about the novel. Words are used that are imprecise and clumsy. *Realism* and *materialism*, for example. He said he has heard the term *socialist realism* innumerable times and has yet to know precisely what it means. As for *materialism*, it makes him think of a line written on Kant's gravestone in Ger-



Harrison Salisbury (left) and Arthur Miller.

many after World War II. Despite all the aerial bombing in the vicinity, Kant's tombstone was unscarred. On its surface, someone had written in chalk: "What think ye now, Kant, of materialism?"

The final session was perhaps the most animated of the entire meeting. Arthur Miller was good enough to accept our invitation to join the conference on the last day.

Miller attempted to put the conference in historical perspective. The United States and the Soviet Union, he said, were two prophetic civilizations, separated not so much by their histories as by "fundamentally different keys to the universe." Nothing, he said, is as difficult to accommodate as two separate priesthoods. "This must be understood if we want to communicate with one another as writers."

Miller doubted that any real progress can be made until Americans learn a lot more about Soviet literature than they know now. He confessed his own ignorance. He had not heard of the members of the Soviet delegation, Katayev excepted. The overriding need, he said, is to get books into translation. The traditional outside view of Soviet literature is that it all too often lends itself to propagandist purposes, that it isn't sufficiently resistant to the political framework in which it has to operate, and that it is not adequately subjected to stern yardsticks of literary criticism. If this view is seriously flawed, then it is necessary for outsiders to see the evidence of substantial change. He advised his Russian colleagues "to permit English-speaking writers to have access to Soviet literature." He also deplored a certain imbalance in our conference, with the Americans feeling free to criticize themselves and their society without a corresponding freedom on the other side.

Nikolai Fedorenko asked Mille whose fault it was that he did not know the names of writers whose work were read by millions of people. As fo Miller's comment that English-speaking writers be "permitted" to have "access" to Soviet literature, Fedorenko said that his fellow writers have been attempting over the years not just to "permit" but to persuade American writers to become acquainted with the works of Soviet writers. But since Arthur Miller was apparently unaware of this, Fedorenko invited him to consult the biographical material on each writer that had been made available to the American participants.

I felt it necessary to apologize for the fact that through inadvertence I had not provided Mr. Miller with the materials referred to by Mr. Fedorenko. Actually many of Miller's key points had been made by the Soviets themselves. He had said the first imperative is to get worthwhile Soviet books into translation. He had called for increased exchanges so that outside writers can get to know Soviet writers personally. He had blamed himself for his failure to know more about Soviet writing than he did. It was unfortunate that his remarks should have been taken in a negative light.

In any case, the exchange over Arthur Miller's observations led to something approaching the heated conversations in Moscow last year with the Americans raising the que

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tion of the suppression of writers in the Soviet Union, and Co-chairman Fedorenko defending the action of his government against the dissidents by saying it had no choice except to enforce the laws against lawbreakers.

At the characterization of the dissident writers as lawbreakers, Kurt Vonnegut got up quietly and walked out. I don't know whether the Soviet writers drew the connection, but there was no doubt in the minds of the American writers about the significance of Vonnegut's departure.

Finally, the conference returned to its basic theme, with Edward Albee referring to various points that had come up in previous sessions. He said that several writers from both delegations had spoken of the "function of art." He didn't think that art must submit to doctrines of "acceptability, accessibility, usefulness." Such doctrines, he said, are better determined by someone other than the artist. "Our ignorance of art is profound," he said, "and contributes to the absurdity. We are in great darkness. There are far too many people who are eager to tell us what art is. It is the function of the creative artist to be—and to be allowed to be—a non-distorting mirror."

OUR MEETING was drawing to a close, and speakers on both sides were eager to consider practical steps toward literary cooperation. Alexander Kosorukov said that the problems of the commercial book publishing companies need not be regarded as insoluble. Why not establish a state publishing house in America?

It was difficult for the Americans to think of anything that defined more clearly the differences not just between the two groups but between the two societies. The notion of the government as a book publisher was anathema to us, and we said so. Governments by their very nature have trouble understanding what writers are all about. Governments are instinctively nervous about what goes on inside the minds of writers. And for good reason. Men who run governments have a habit of using their power to stay in power; and they know writers have a knack for disrupting that process.

Kosorukov said he had been thinking of the possibility that an American state publishing house select and issue only foreign literature.

We responded that we wouldn't trust government to select and publish any books, foreign or domestic.

Later, over lunch, one of our Russian colleagues asked me privately whether we weren't running a risk of getting into trouble with the U.S. State Department, co-sponsor of the meeting, by what we had just said about our distrust of government. I replied that there was a far greater likelihood that anyone in the government who objected to these observations would be in trouble himself.

Vera Dunham refined and extended the proposal she had made originally at the 1977 meeting for a systematic program of translation. The conference agreed to appoint a small executive committee that would examine this and other suggestions. The committee would meet in Vienna or some other European city and would prepare the agenda for a third meeting of the entire group.

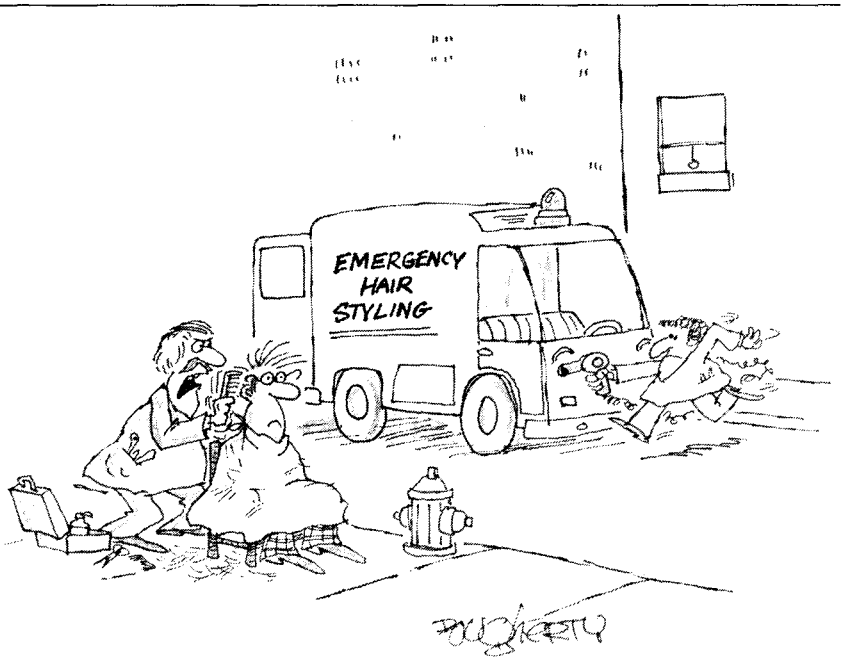
What was learned, what was gained, as the result of the Academy meeting? From the American standpoint, perhaps the most important thing we learned is that it is no longer accurate to say that Soviet writers can be divided into only two categories—the out-and-out dissidents and the hard-line party members. There is a wide octave between the two, with varying intensities, shadings, and leanings. We learned that Soviet literary rubberstamping of political purpose has gone out of style and that authors are dealing increasingly with questions of corruption and abuse of power, although they are adroit enough to know what lines not to cross. We learned that the renewed and enlarged respect for classical Russian literature has been accompanied by a sharpening of literary and human values.

It is presumptuous to say what the Russians learned from the Americans. They were certainly aware of our convictions that as members of a world literary community, we are deeply troubled about the condition of the dissident writers and that we want to be able to communicate with them in a meaningful and helpful way. They were also made aware of our desire to find out more about contemporary Soviet literature. Certainly they know that the Americans have no difficulty in agreeing with Valentin Katayev and Sergei Zalygin when they speak about the need of the writer to write out of his or her experiences, and the related need to search fully for those human values that give purpose and direction to society even as they give luster to literature.

The writer, perhaps more than any of his fellow artists, has access to the human subconscious. His words sink deep, shaping dreams, easing the pain of loneliness, banishing incantations and omens, keeping alive the memories of the race, providing intimations of immortality, nourishing great anticipations, sharpening the instinct for justice, and imparting respect for the fragility of life. These functions are essential for human evolution. Without them, civilization becomes brittle and breaks easily.

Society must be measured, therefore, not just by its display of power but by its attention to the conditions of creativity and its acceptance of human sovereignty as the highest value.

—N.C.



"For God's sake, man, hurry up with that blow dryer!"

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NOTES FROM THE BLUE COAST

Is Italy a Burnt-out Case?

by Anthony Burgess

HERE IN Monaco there is bad spring weather but comparative peace. The roulette wheels spin, the *haute cuisine* is dished up in the Hôtel de Paris, the stands are ready for the Monte Carlo motor car rally. Our humdrum lives are spiced by smug thankfulness that we haven't been contaminated by the present hell of our neighbor Italy.

Aldo Moro, head of the Christian Democrats, was—as the world knows or has already forgotten—kidnapped by members of the *Brigate Rosse*, or Red Brigades, subjected to what was called a "people's trial," and then shot. His body was found in a car that was parked on a Roman street, midway between two political headquarters—that of the Christian Democratic party and that of the Communist party. Nobody except his fellow politicians and family has been devastated by these events. Like the rest of us, the Italians have lost the capacity for being shocked by the killing of a public man. This capacity began to disappear shortly after the assassination of John F. Kennedy. Moreover, we have read so many drugstore best sellers and seen so many films about the murder of great men and the ransoming of whole cities and similar enormities that we have little emotion left to bring to the real thing. As with the moon landings, we suffer from overpreparedness. The kidnapping and killing of the pope might well excite little feeling anywhere except that of a certain artistic satisfaction: At last laggard reality has caught up with popular fiction.

Nobody was happy about the cold-blooded shooting of Moro's bodyguards, but Italians have such deep and ancient enmity towards their governors that outrage about the kidnapping was much qualified by a feeling that this was what Moro deserved. Whatever public figure was elected for trial and execution by the anarchists, the generality would still mumble over their espresso about wild justice. I share the feeling but not the nature of the rationalization. I think that any man who seeks power in the state is bound to be asking for trouble. The danger he is in from his enemies is one of the prices he must pay for ambition. It's a pity about his family and his bodyguards, but the safety of others is one of the things he must consult before striving for high office. It is wrong nevertheless for armed anarchists to take the law into their own hands.

One outcome of the Moro kidnapping has been what you might expect, in Italy or anywhere else—brutal or merely discourteous police interference in the lives of ordinary citizens. Houses and persons and cars were searched without warrant. A precedent of enhanced police power, once established, is very hard to rescind. Will the time ever come when any of us, anywhere, will not have to be searched before boarding an aircraft? To distract Italian citizens from a political mess highlighted by the summary actions of the Red Brigades, a number of new bureaucratic idiocies have been instituted. I have a house in Italy, but I am not allowed to purchase heating fuel for it without first presenting my fiscal code number to the retailers. As I pay no taxes in Italy, I *have* no fiscal code number. A new law, that of the *bustometro*, fixes the size and shape of envelopes. Film stars like Sophia Loren and producers like Carlo Ponti are accused of exporting illegal lire and of robbing Italian soil of Etruscan vases (which everybody does).

They say that Italy is ungovernable. They say that in more than 2,000 years, Italy, or its constituent states, has had only government by extortion, repression, foreign conquest. Because Italians expect their rulers to be corrupt, their rulers *are* corrupt. Southern Italians emigrating to the United States take it for granted that the state will exploit them, so they bring along their own countertyrannies—the Mafia, for example. It is difficult to know whether this ingrained cynicism about government should be accounted highly sophisticated or desperately naïve. The active opponents of the state, like the *Brigate Rosse*, show no love of the democratic settlement of injustice; their philosophy is usually a half-baked mixture of Marx and Bakunin; they offer no serious alternative to a system corrupt or inefficient in practice but just and workable in theory. The land where Christ's vicar is always ready to expound original sin does not really believe that systems depend on the people who use them. Instead, Italy follows a different Pope:

For forms of government let fools contest;
Whate'er is best administer'd is best.

We need not think that the Italian political mess is something idiosyncratically Italian. We're all in one kind of mess or another, though Italy has a long and romantic history of *banditi*, *anarchismo*, and *risorgimenti* that renders her own mess unreal and vaguely operatic to the outsider. What happens in sunny Italy can't happen here. W. S. Gilbert was kidnapped as a baby in Naples, and we tend to regard southern banditry as amusingly Gilbertian. But all that we're seeing now in Italy is an exaggerated projection of our own lack of faith in government, our translation of sexual permissiveness into the right to take bloody unilateral action on behalf of puerile notions of liberty, our unwillingness to see the triumph of the social contract as the result of centuries of struggle against arbitrary despotism. Despotism is so easy; democracy, so difficult. Italians believe that democracy is more than difficult: It's impossible. Their governors will remain inefficient or corrupt so long as the governed expect them to be like that. Change always has to begin with the people. But the Italians who come in from Ventimiglia won't have that. They've absorbed more of the doctrine of original sin than they realize. ◉

Wit Twister No. 121

Edited by Arthur Swan

The object of the game is to complete the poem by thinking of one word whose letters, when rearranged, will yield the appropriate word for each series of blanks. Each dash within a blank corresponds to a letter of the word. Answers on page 48.

What are these men who in the
church convene?
— — — — — — —of the
crimson altar screen,
They fill the channels gnawed by
termite hordes:
— — — — — — — of the
— — — — — — —
— — — — — — —boards.

Contributed by Ernst T. Theimer, Rumson, N.J.

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Answer to *Fraser Young Literary Crypt No. 110* (see page 36): No matter how much we seek, we never find anything but ourselves.
—Anatole France

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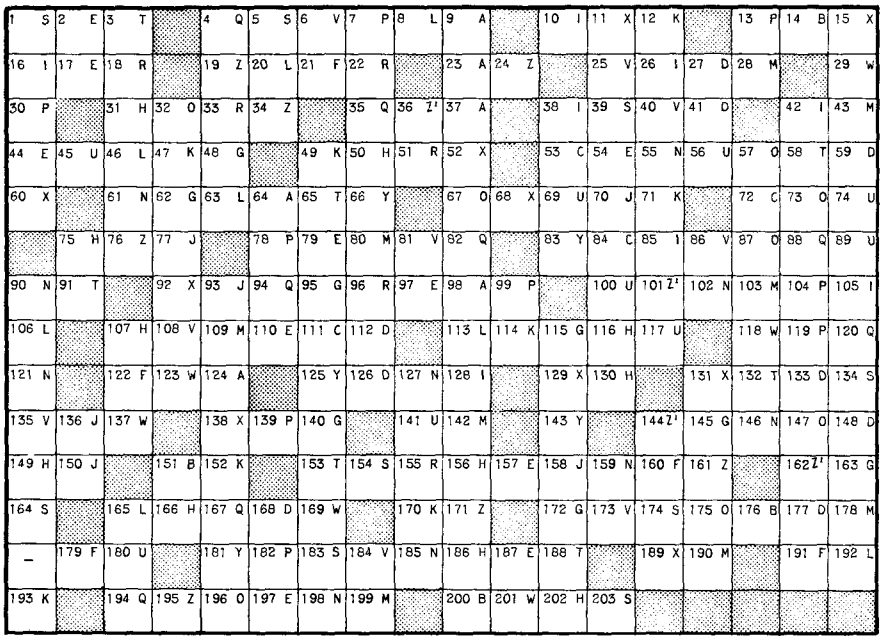
DOUBLE-CROSTIC

Number 150

by Thomas H. Middleton



Instructions:
If you've never solved one of these puzzles, it will probably look much more difficult than it actually is. If you can answer only a few of the WORDS correctly, you're on your way to solving the puzzle. Fill in the numbered blanks of all the WORDS you can guess and write the letter of each numbered blank in its correspondingly numbered square in the diagram. The letters printed in the upper-right-hand corners of the squares indicate from what WORD a particular square's letter comes.
The diagram, when filled in, should read as a quotation from a published work. The dark squares are the spaces between words. If there is no dark square at the end of a line, a word may carry over to the line below.
The first letter of each WORD, reading down, will spell the name of the author and the title of the work from which the quotation is taken.
You should find yourself seeing words and phrases taking form in the diagram; so you can work back and forth, from WORDS to diagram and from diagram to WORDS, until the diagram is filled in.

Answer to ***Double-Crostic No. 149*** appears on page 47.

CLUES	WORDS
A. Pierce with many holes	9 23 37 64 98 124
B. Mountain in Thessaly, eastern Greece	151 176 200 14
C. City in northeastern Somerset, England	53 72 84 111
D. Simple, uncompounded	133 148 177 27 41 59 112 126 168
E. Misleading clue (2 wds.)	157 187 197 2 17 44 54 79 97 110
F. Ridicules, gibes at	122 160 179 191 21
G. This might describe Nero	48 62 140 95 115 145 163 172
H. Expressing censure	186 156 31 50 116 149 107 75 130 166 202
I. Russian violinist	10 26 38 126 85 105 16 42
J. Diverse	70 93 136 158 77 150
K. Gives a piece of one's mind (2 wds.)	170 193 12 47 71 114 49 152
L. Slaked, extinguished	165 20 46 63 113 192 8 106
M. Experienced, endured	109 142 178 28 103 199 43 80 190
N. Derby site (2 wds.)	55 102 127 159 121 185 198 61 90 146

CLUES	WORDS
O. Minor punishment	175 147 32 73 57 87 196 67
P. 1892 song by Hoyt and Gaunt, from *A Trip to Chinatown* (2 wds.)	7 182 139 13 30 78 104 119 99
Q. "I grant you and out of breath; and so was he," says Falstaff (3 wds., *Henry IV, Part I*)	167 4 35 82 94 120 194 88
R. Most singular	51 155 18 96 33 22
S. Italian-American leading lady of the Twenties (1899–1961; *Blood and Sand*; full name)	134 183 1 39 154 174 203 164 5
T. Stylish, fashionable (2 wds.)	58 188 132 65 91 153 3
U. "Thy have brought me home" (2 wds.; Poe, "To Helen")	180 69 89 100 74 56 141 117 45
V. Travel or roam about for mere pleasure	81 86 184 173 135 40 108 6 25
W. Hasty departure	118 169 201 137 123 29
X. Good fish bait	189 15 60 68 131 11 129 138 52 92
Y. Scratches; makes fumbling motions	181 125 143 66 83
Z. Charges; requires; interdicts, bans	76 161 19 171 195 24 34
Z'. Pen surname of Amandine Aurore Lucie Dupin, Baronne Dudevant	101 162 36 144

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THE BACK DOOR

Docu-dreck

"Death be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadfull, for, thou art not soe,
For, those, whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow,
Die not, poore death." "Holy Sonnet X"
John Donne

JOHN DONNE should have joined me at the movies recently. The fare was *The Greek Tycoon*, a trashy tale about a shipping magnate who marries the glamorous widow of a glamorous assassinated president with an Irish surname, an attorney general for a younger brother, etc. Deviations from familiar facts were for convenience's sake. President Cassidy is shot on a Cape Cod beach (deduct: cost of a motorcade). The time is now (deduct: cost of researching and re-creating old clothes and cityscapes). Liz Cassidy is permitted one miscarriage and no progeny (deduct: wear and tear on scriptwriter's brain, for how does one handle children in a romantic movie?). The insatiable gossip can thrill to smooching in the Oval Office, a former first lady kicking her second husband in the groin, chicanery in high places, and other episodes that should persuade him of, if nothing else, a public person's defenselessness against defamation and embarrassment in the name of free speech.

The whole shabby exploit would be beneath mention were it not typical of an increasingly popular genre. Docudramas—made up of supposed scenes from the lives of living or recently deceased public persons—are proliferating on television, on the stage, and in fiction. Sometimes, as in the case of *Eleanor and Franklin* and *The Guns of October* (an ABC-Television film about the Cuban missile crisis), the producers struggle to stick to verifiable facts. Sometimes, as in the case of Broadway shows like *Elvis the Legend Lives* and *Beatlemania* [see "Nights of the Living Dead: Cashing in on Rock and Roll Heaven," *SR*, May 13], the attraction is the fidelity of the imitation, just as it is in the case of *non*-animated waxworks. Sometimes, as in the case of John Ehrlichman's Watergate saga (the novel and the TV miniseries) and *The Greek Tycoon*, recent history is shamelessly appropriated.

In all cases, the appeal is more voyeuristic than intellectual. These are peep shows onto the lives of the famous, quite different from, say, Shakespeare's history plays, which employ the safely dead as dramatic emblems; and from historical novels, which use the famous, usually long dead, to set a scene or to establish authenticity; and from the misty-eyed film biographies of the Thirties and Forties, which appealed more to nostalgia than to curiosity. Docudramas purport to be neither fantasies nor strict documentaries (whose subject matter is limited to verifiable fact) but actuality itself. Indeed, the more the disingenuous makers disclaim any similarity between their characters and persons living or dead, the more the audience is supposed to believe that *this is the way it was, an eyewitness account, the inside dope*.

And so what? If audiences enjoy them, what harm is there? True, reputations are mangled, but the lives of public persons, as we all know, are public property (which is one reason we don't have higher-caliber public persons).

The victim is history. In Cicero's words, "History is the witness that testifies to the passing of time; it illumines reality, vitalizes memory, provides guidance in daily life, and brings us tidings of antiquity." The competent historian, Cicero continued, "shall never dare utter an untruth and shall suppress nothing that is true."

By distorting history for dramatic purposes and trying to pass off the results as actuality, docudramatists muddle our memories. Instead of coming to grips with what really happened and learning from it, we must struggle to sort out the facts from the lies introduced for dramatic (and economic) purposes. Did Aristotle Onassis *really* marry Jackie to avoid being prosecuted in the United States? Did Bobby Kennedy *really* plead with Jackie not to marry Onassis? Instead of treating the past as history, which requires discipline, the docudramatists treat it as material, which they can use as they please. Lazily and arrogantly, they presume no obligations to the dead, the truth, or their audiences' recollections—merely to the buck, whose influx justifies their carelessness.

John Donne would not have smiled at the way in which the entertainment industry has fulfilled his sonnet's promise. Public persons no longer die in America, they simply pass into myth, often before their actual deaths. Unless Americans develop the courtesy, the respectfulness, the self-restraint, to treat our public persons as real persons who lived and died and whose life stories cannot be altered, we will lose our grasp on history as well the wisdom that history can impart.

—CARLL TUCKER

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memorization. How [illegible]
"Why am I reading a [illegible]
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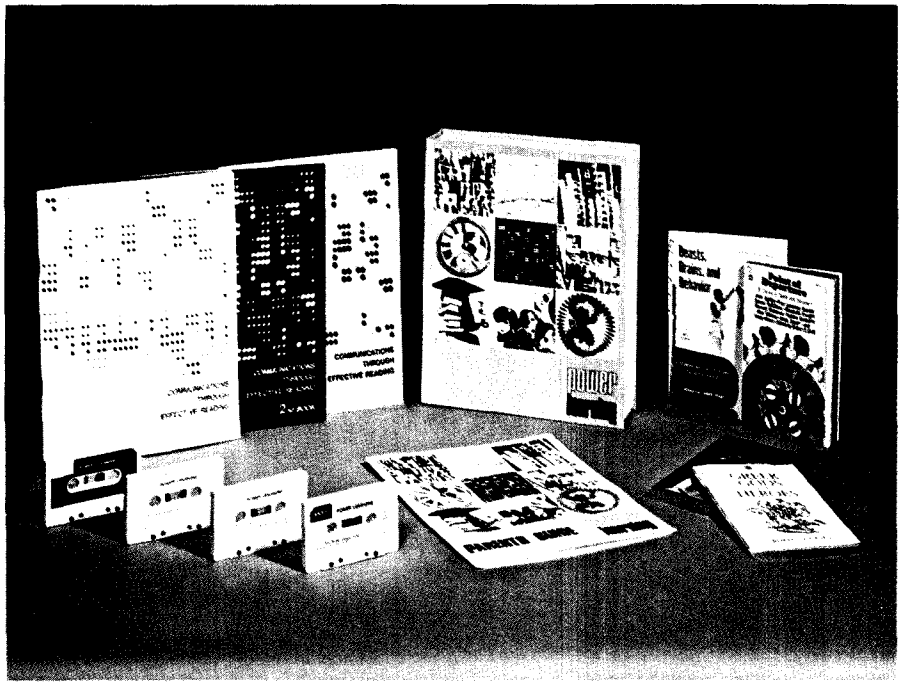

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